

THE SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE OF ART



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**THE SPIRIT AND
SUBSTANCE OF ART**



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THE SPIRIT AND SUBSTANCE OF ART

BY

LOUIS W. FLACCUS

*Professor of Philosophy
University of Pennsylvania*

F. S. CROFTS & CO., Publishers
NEW YORK - - - - 1926

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BY VAIL-BALLOU PRESS, INC., BINGHAMTON, NEW YORK.

PREFACE

This is no book for the dogmatist, who asks few questions and distrusts all problems; nor for the system-builder, who twists all things to a scheme of his making. It is an attempt to understand the substance, form, and spirit of art—to move a little closer to art as it is practised and enjoyed, and as a place for it is gained within the interests and tasks of man's life. One volume offers scant room for this. Books have been written on every one of these problems; theories have been woven and slashed through at a stroke; art has gone its own creative way at its own sweet will; time mocks at the too confident systematizer—how then escape a sense of caution born of distrust of anything final?

A text-book it might be called by one who discovers it to be informative and who attends to the headings which throw its march into convenient patterns. But it is not a mechanical toy to be wound up again and again in the classroom and sent on its short whirring way. It is meant for the use of students and for whoever is eager, keen-witted, willing to have the mettle of his mind tested—and persistently inquisitive. No student need read it who is not venturesome and adventure-loving in his thinking. No teacher ought to use it who lacks interest in thought-processes, and who is unwilling to assist in his own education—by uncovering the work that lies hidden in short chapters and occasional references, making the most of hints and drawing parallels, cutting more deeply into problems, and making the freest use of opportunities for thought. It has the welcome of open doors and open windows; if any one, thoughtfully responsive to the welcome, finds that he must walk out

again, I shall not object. I should be endangering my own intellectual life if I held that any book could be final.

The method used is the empirical one of observing and grouping facts and pushing on to general theories. This is not an easy method for aesthetics. There the facts are complex and delicate; the problems are not of a kind—some are compact and sharply limited, others spread like ink on a blotter; and general theories are apt to be incautious and personally colored.

Where firsthand experience is lacking, and there is an insensitiveness to artistic value it is useless to write. The spirit of an art must be caught from within. It is for this reason that I have given the writing of the chapter on MUSIC to PAUL KRUMMEICH, who as a practising musician lives and breathes music, and who combines a compelling curiosity with a sensitive and disciplined taste. His theories are his own; they are part of a book on music he is planning. Little attempt has been made to edit them or to fit them to mine.

In what I have written I have aimed at thought tested and controlled by a personal response to works of art. The examples cited are many. Sketchy and superficial as they seem when glanced at, they were not lightly chosen. In all cases they mean something to me—an experience, an honest response, a pleasure. If I have drawn widely on art that is very old and art that is very new, and to some very questionable, it is not because I look for my pleasure shamelessly and take it where I find it, but because I do not consider it honest or a matter of pride to reject in favor of traditional values anything that takes hold and maintains itself as an experience. To the Barnes Foundation I owe a debt of gratitude for the opportunity given me to see and study many of the newer masters. They have swept into and widened my appreciation of painting, but in no sense have they made me unfit to enjoy the old.

An intelligent reading of this book is possible only if the reader does not allow the names I have mentioned to remain mere names. He must be willing to expose himself to my examples, to judge whether they are aptly chosen, and to bring to bear on any theories offered whatever direct acquaintance with works of art he may possess.

I regret the absence of pictures. A few would have been of little use; a great many would have made the volume too bulky.

It is my belief that art is a living experience—a great creative venture on the part of races and individuals; and that a study of either the creative effort or the receptive response must have about it something of a like life and enthusiasm. Scholarship need not be drab, and enthusiasm is bad only when it is ill-considered and uncritical. I have not hesitated to put into what I have written warmth and personal rhythm when I felt them to be needed. The picturesque and striking phrases I have at times used are not adventitious ornament—gold topped nails driven at random into the wooden body of aesthetic doctrine—; they carry the enthusiasm and bring home the analysis. This way of writing on aesthetics—the only way possible to me—makes a cursory reading dangerous. The manner is not mere rhetoric; and the matter, seriously chosen and analyzed, may be had at the price of further study.

The lesser part of my thanks goes to those of my students who innocently and unwittingly helped precipitate my thought; the larger, to those who actively and thoughtfully furthered it. I have grown with the writing, and with the criticism friends have offered. In the last and irksome stages of preparing the book for the press, Dorothy Bartlett has been ready with suggestions of value; part of the work on the index is hers; and she has helped keep the devil from the printed page.

The Greek coin on the cover is meant to show how artis-

tic feeling and decorative reshaping entered what to a less art-loving race would be merely a matter of commerce.

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L. W. F.

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PART ONE
INTRODUCTORY

THE FIELD OF AESTHETICS

Aesthetics may roughly be defined as the theory of the beautiful. If "the beautiful" were a clean-cut term, and one yielding itself readily to an interest not to be distracted, a field of inquiry could easily be marked off. The beautiful is a term of several meanings; and even when taken in its widest sense it offers no more than the high spot of an interest which includes art, as it appears in the cultural history of the race, as it is created and enjoyed, as it reflects many impulses, aims, and ideals, as it gains its effects through different media, and as it seeks the disciplined expression of patterns and types. It is then not to be wondered at if writers on aesthetics differ on the question of range. While some affect the simple exclusive lines of an intensive study of beauty, others go far afield in the realms of anthropology, sociology, archaeology, and genetic and descriptive psychology, intent on gathering a varied mass of intellectual merchandise; others allow themselves to be carried far into details and problems of technique.

Historically its growth has been haphazard—a matter of uncontrolled accumulation and shifting interests and affiliations. It has taken its problems, materials, and inspirations from philosophy, psychology, and the social sciences; and has gained strength and scope alike from the penetrative insight of the reflective artist, the acumen of the critic, and the patient, circumscribed work of the scientist. Because of this, its place in the system of intellectual disciplines is ill-defined and open to controversy.

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AFFILIATIONS OF AESTHETICS

AESTHETICS AND PHILOSOPHY

The philosopher is not satisfied with facts in their isolated, obtrusive presence; nor is he content to follow science in its patient and restricted uncoupling and linking. He has a passion for wholeness; what appeals to him is a well-rounded, inclusive system. The cosmos in its reaches and the mind in its tangles are his field. Again and again, from Plato to Hegel or to Croce, art has been moved within this field. Modern aesthetics has shown a desire to become independent and to keep clear of the sweeping and often vague theories of the philosopher. But further thought shows that it is impossible for the aesthetician to do without his services. Some of the problems cannot be dealt with in any other way. Thus he must come to a decision as to how art is related to life—in its origins and in its aims. No matter how keenly he is interested in the simple, tangible, concrete phenomena of art, he is sooner or later forced into far-flung conceptual thinking. If he turns to painting, he is brought up sharply against the problem of representational values and carried over into the perplexities of theories of nature, of ideal, and of reality. Again, he is confronted with cosmic forces and interests in the tragedy of Aeschylus, the poetry of Browning, the music of Wagner, and the sculpture of Rodin; and with the boldly philosophical theories of many creative artists.

Aesthetics has much to gain from a sound affiliation with philosophy; it can escape looseness in its terms and a truncated, mutilated consideration of its materials, only if it welcomes disciplined and ambitious thinking. It must, however, keep its grip on art as a concrete living thing; and use philosophy only where it ought to be used.

AESTHETICS, ANTHROPOLOGY, AND ETHNOLOGY

Anthropology is interested in man as he modifies his environment in response to impulses which, as they are expressed and satisfied, result in progressive cultural achievements. At a point in time when life must have been simple and control of it crude and meagre, art appears in skilled and interesting forms; and from that time to this, creatively reborn in a thousand variants, it has kept its freshness of appeal.

Art reflects deep-lying, persistent, ever-actively sought human values: it is one of man's ways of taking and reshaping his world. He smears his body with colored clay or uses the tattooing needle; pierces his lips and decorates himself with feathers and necklaces of teeth; delights in chipped stone and hammered brass; fills the wall spaces of his caves with pictures of the bison, the mammoth, the wild boar; and cuts the sketch of a deer in stone or reindeer horn. He builds homes for his gods and weaves his prayers into rugs or into the patterns of his dances. Fanciful as it may be to say that all tragic situations, all jokes, and all tone-structures can be traced back to a few types and motifs, it must be admitted that there are startling uniformities in early art. The drawings of Bushmen are not unlike those of the cave-dwellers of Spain and Algiers; Cretan pottery and Indian blankets are similar in their designs; folk-lore and myth-making reveal striking parallelisms. Craftsmanship in the fashioning of stone implements—in processes and forms—shows a like uniformity within a very wide geographical field. But there are differences as well in both cases. At this point the ethnologist can be of service. Studying man as he does in his racial differentiation and in groups of kinship and common customs, discovering art as not the least important factor in tribal life, and seeking to under-

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stand it everywhere in its specific cultural setting, his work must not be overlooked. It is he who holds one of the keys to the understanding of art. He can tell us what a negro idol, an Indian totem pole, a war mask, a prayer rug subtend in the way of beliefs, fears, and hopes; and what is their local script and symbolism. Art can no longer be studied *in vacuo*; it has a history and a context; and patient and cautious use must be made of every scrap of material the anthropologist and the ethnologist furnish.

AESTHETICS AND SOCIOLOGY

The sociologist studies the general forms of an articulated social life. He understands work and play in their social meanings, traces gregarious impulses in their varying expressions, catches the form and the spirit of institutions and collective enterprises, watches the social process in its spreadings and changes. His work, too, is needed by the aesthete. For art is socially conditioned in a double sense. It appears in a close and often perplexing relation to the practical interests of social groups. The individual is to be impressed and his services are to be enlisted. Memorials in bronze or stone and mural paintings are to glorify the group in his eyes; processional pomp is to make ritual impressive; war dances are to rouse the war spirit; prayer rugs, amulets, incantations, and ceremonies of purification are used as bids for rain and a good harvest or as protection from disease; the beat of rowing or harvesting songs is to make collective work easier. All these are ways in which the group attends to its necessary business and attends to it with a flourish. Again art reflects industrial and institutional changes, and emotional, intellectual, and spiritual readjustments. Thus a truly sympathetic study of the classical, the Byzantine, the Gothic, and the baroque styles in architecture is impossible without an insight into the re-

ligious beliefs, conditions of living, emotional reactions, fashions, and customs of the times. A study of social records, readings in Rabelais or in the popular sermons of the time, and a knowledge of the medieval mind in its perplexing mixture of the naive and the sophisticated, the traditional and the rebellious, the gross and the spiritual, will assist in the understanding of the grotesque and often indecent sculptures of the medieval churches in France and Germany; without a knowledge of chivalry and of theology in their forms and spirit the French *cante fable* and the Morality and Miracle Plays must remain unintelligible.

AESTHETICS AND PSYCHOLOGY

Aesthetic experience is a psychical fact. The simplest exclamatory enjoyment of a picture, the most direct shaping of clay or putting together of sounds involve sensation, perception, imagery, ear and finger memory. However haphazard the enjoyment or wayward the creative impulse, they are legitimate material for a science whose ambition it is to reduce to order the varied mass of psycho-physical facts. Aesthetics, then, has much to gain from an alliance with psychology and can make good use of its analyses and experiments.

AESTHETICS, CRITICISM, AND ARTISTIC TECHNIQUE

Criticism is the appreciative and discriminating study of single works of art; questions of artistic technique are questions as to what specific means and methods are used to bring about artistic effects. To what extent ought aesthetics to commit itself to criticism and to the detailed and minute analysis of technical processes?

Art calls for an appreciative response; and criticism is part of the answer. At one end of its range are confes-

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sions and enthusiasms with little more than a lover's logic to back them; at the other end are painstaking analysis of works of art and reasoned valuation. Critics from Longinus to Walter Pater or Anatole France have said many things of value, and have had their share in the spreading of a more subtle and more discriminating enjoyment of art. With the play, the statue, the painting before them they have labored unceasingly to discover and fix quality and to establish canons of good taste. Aesthetics is interested, among other things, in the quality of good art, and has much to gain from criticism at its best. It needs the warm and intimate touch, and the close study of works of art. But criticism may easily degenerate into a dogmatism of impressions or into the cheap cleverness and catchiness which is all too prevalent among American critics. Even when it does not become superficial and flashy it is too neglectful of general problems and of the implications of canons of taste, and too casual and unambitious in its thought to take the place of aesthetics.

There is a question how far the aesthetician should step into the field which the technical and historical students of the several arts make their own. Each of the arts has its material and its ends, its ways of working, its resources and difficulties, and its types. Neither its forms nor its meanings can be understood apart from its own problems of technique. Thus ballad and sonnet, sculpture in wood and in marble, miniature and mural painting, sketches in ink and in charcoal, the wood-cut and the lithograph all reveal differences in pattern, creative rendering, and expressive quality. Mimetic, gymnastic, and decorative dances are different in form and spirit. Etchings can carry more in the way of symbolism and give a bolder display of the ugly than can paintings. Wood-cuts have a vigor all their own. To this must be added the traditional technique of craftsmen and schools, and the individual technique of

artists. An example of the former is Greek vase-painting; of the latter, the straight brush strokes of Van Gogh or the heavy black contour line of Daumier. How far into matters of this sort ought the aesthetician to go? If he wishes to avoid mere generalities, he must follow art into much of its articulated and individualized life; but he ought not to become involved in the endless detail of endless distinctions. His main purpose is, after all, a series of generalizations revolving about the problem of beauty; and to him each work of art is the fragmentary embodiment of a narrowly circumscribed artistic purpose—one item in a column of beauty.

The policy of the open door seems to be the right one for aesthetics in its relations with philosophy, the social sciences, psychology, and criticism with their medley of facts and problems. It is like a port of entry in which, for lack of a system of imports, stores accumulate in confusion. It is best to have the brisk intellectual traffic, and to chance reducing it to some sort of order. This may be done most easily by taking beauty as the central problem and grouping as many problems as we can about our interest in beauty. But this interest must be a specialized and not a vague or general one.

THE TWOFOLD MEANING OF BEAUTY

Aesthetics concerns itself mainly with the problem of beauty.¹ Little is gained, however, if the loose popular use of the term "beautiful" remains unchallenged. Its causes lie deeper than the youthful lack of discrimination which was shown in a college girl's copy of the *Odyssey* with its comment "beautiful" or "pretty" on passage after passage,

¹ This seems to be recognized by the choice of such titles as *Das Schöne und die Kunst* by Vischer; *The Sense of Beauty* by Santayana; *The Psychology of Beauty* by Puffer; *The Beautiful* by Vernon Lee; *An Introduction to the Experimental Psychology of Beauty* by Valentine.

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from the picture of the garden of Calypso to those of storms at sea and the grotesque, horrible blinding of Polyphemus. It is a disconcerting fact that artists and critics alike use the term in a very free and ambiguous way. When Rodin insists that beauty is not the highest law of sculpture and then contends that to the great artist everything in nature is beautiful, he is not contradicting himself—he is simply helpless before an ambiguity of language. He uses beauty first in the narrow sense of what is regular, harmonious, directly and wholly pleasing, and then in the broad sense of what is artistically effective. His *Thinker* and *Balzac* are not beautiful in the sense in which the *Hermes* of Praxiteles is beautiful. Daring marks subject and technique. In its search for the stimulating and the significant this strong, nervous, imaginative art is constantly overstepping the bounds of formal beauty. At its best it is satisfying; and it is this quality Rodin has in mind when he uses “beautiful” in the broad sense. Aesthetics would be the gainer, and much narrowing and stretching could be avoided if the use could be limited to what is formally beautiful in contrast to what is sublime or graceful or picturesque or expressive. Beauty then would be but one category among many.

A very simple system of aesthetics could be gained at a stroke if beauty in the narrow sense were the only thing artistically effective. But this is not true. Neither the social nor the personal forms and aims of art can be set within formal beauty. How little of the effectiveness of a tragedy by Shakespeare, a dramatic soliloquy by Browning, a landscape by Turner, a music drama by Wagner is to be traced to such beauty! The *Oedipus* may be well-nigh perfect in the smooth interplay of its parts and the grace and music of its language, but much of its meaning as a work of art lies in its rendering of the dark and chaotic forces of life. Bold enterprise may be seen in the forceful

art of a Maillol, a Mestrovic, or a Van Gogh; in the distortions of a Matisse; in the perverse drawings of a Beardsley; and in the macabre etchings of a Rops or a Klinger. Complex and mixed as is the appeal of such art, it is nevertheless not to be neglected. No aesthetician has the right to turn away from the constant experimentation that is going on in modern art, and frown upon the search for an ever increasing range of expressiveness. If he can feel the sheer beauty of Sappho's verse

Ἦρος ἄγγελος ἰμερόφωνος ἀήδων

Spring's messenger, the sweet-voiced nightingale

and enjoy the homely lines of Whitman and the strident notes of Carl Sandburg or Vachel Lindsay, he will not attempt to limit aesthetic theory to an analysis of the qualities and conditions of formal beauty.

NATURE AND ART

Ought aesthetics to limit itself to beauty in art or ought it to include beauty in nature? Usually beauty in nature is excluded. There are some notable exceptions. Hegel attempts an analysis of animal forms; Ruskin in his *Modern Painters* gives an aesthetics of soil and cloud, of river-courses, of striated rocks—finding in all these a neglected expressiveness; Volkelt illustrates his theories of the characteristic and the sublime, and Lipps his theory of empathy, by constant references to nature.

It is difficult to see how on principle natural beauty can be excluded. There is iridescence in a soap bubble as well as in a Tiffany vase. Sunsets or light on water or the note of a bird are a challenge to art in their aesthetic appeal. The "dynamism" of the Futurists is but a poor thing in comparison with tumultuous seas, a volcanic upheaval, or the throbbing life of some wild animal snared. All the

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elements of strength and beauty—lines, masses, colors—are found in nature; and they are there in startling combination. The sweep of curves, the thrust of jagged or straight lines, the tilting of planes, and the banking of masses are all to be had in a single tree; and that tree may call forth discriminating and relational activities as readily as does a landscape painting. The beauty of nature may be used as the substructure of aesthetics and yields many hints as to what is pleasing and what is not. Greek sculptors sought to deduce canons from the study of human proportions; Zeising discovered in the proportions of the arm and elsewhere in nature the Golden Section Ratio and applied it widely and rather uncritically to the whole field of art. Patterns owe many of their motifs to animal forms and colors.

From a practical point of view, however, it is expedient to limit aesthetics to beauty as it is revealed in art. There the field is narrower and more definitely marked. What in nature exists in conglomerate mass, incidentally, transiently, appears in art isolated and pure, willed as such, and permanently organized. There is in nature a bewildering variety of color schemes and light and shade effects; the simplest woodland scene offers a confused medley of impressions to all the senses. Beauty in the narrow sense is incidental. The color display of birds and their song during the mating season are incidents in sex rivalry and sexual selection; perfect symmetry is rare; there are constant, artistically purposeless intrusions of the ugly and the repulsive; the complexity and irregularity of nature disturb at every step. Nor are the difficulties lessened if beauty is taken in the broad sense. However infrequent and incidental formal beauty may be in the mass of natural effects, force and significance are strongly marked. Is God then an artist in the characteristic? If he is, he is an artist on a very large scale: a scale, in fact, which taxes the

imagination, for the meaning of a tree, a flower, a form of animal life is read in the context of a cosmic drama, wasteful, bewildering, utterly lacking the regularity of an English manor or an old fashioned garden. It matters little whether our reading of the universe is after the manner of Darwin or St. Augustine, the fact remains that the influence of scientific or religious ideas is against the isolation of the artistic in nature. If these influences are cast aside, the conglomerate of practical associations still remains. A field suggests tilling or pasturing; the ocean, seafaring; a grove, holiday making; the gnarled appearance of a tree, the unsuitableness of its timber; the sharply angled tumbling lines of a peak invite thought on whether it can be climbed. If all such responses are suppressed, what remains but the painful picking of bits of significant line or color from a wide and distressingly complex display of materials? In art we face an isolation and purification already accomplished. We are in the presence, too, of willed beauty: of the work of an artist whose selective skill may be responded to, and whose purposes, while a challenge, are a challenge that can be met. What is thus created is given permanence, and offers itself again and again to immediate and discriminating enjoyment.

Aesthetics, then, concerns itself mainly with what is beautiful, in the sense of what is effective in art. In order to discover the sources of such effectiveness it traces the processes by which art is produced and enjoyed. It is interested in the origins and the development of art. Stronger still is its interest in the part played by art in life, in its general aims, and in the highly specialized aims of the several arts. The latter it sees cooperating or interfering; and it follows them some distance, at least, into their technique and their types. It concerns itself with a morphology of general aesthetic types, such as the beautiful, the characteristic, the sublime, the tragic, the comic. In doing

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this it throws the many-sidedness of both art and the aesthetic response in sharp relief. It follows the struggle between tradition and revolt; and makes a study of great diverging preferences, such as naturalism and idealism, classicism and romanticism. If it is ambitious, it invades the aesthetic consciousness of the Oriental; if it is wise, it is comparative within a narrower field—a field which, narrow as it is, holds a perplexing range of perceptions and standards of beauty. In all this work aesthetics moves within a tangle of methods and with a frequent shift of emphasis.

This is a comprehensive program, and a loose one as well. At some future time aesthetics may show a well-knit strength and trim activity within a field of whose topography and limits there can be no doubt; at present it is little more than a group of problems. But this by no mean destroys its value, for each of these problems is rich in possibilities and relations. Each challenges illuminative and correlating thought. If the most is to be made of them, aesthetics must not be reduced to a chapter in psychology or a bit of sociology. There is little to choose between an aesthetics bound in the boards of a philosopher's system and stamped with the gilt letters of arrogance, and the loose, fluttering scraps of the anthropologist. Its true domain lies somewhere between these extremes.

THE METHODS OF AESTHETICS

A method is a means of attaining desired results; and a good method gains such results in the soundest, most forceful, least wasteful way. It is a common mistake to hold that there is only one good method for every problem. There are many effective ways of conducting a campaign or winning a battle or handling scientifically a group of facts. Whenever what is in question is a comprehensive problem which turns out to be a mass of concrete, definitely limited problems, apparently unrelated, there is need of a flexible, resourceful technique of control. Thus winning a war involves financing, provisioning, sanitation, transporting as well as a successful military use of men; and the latter in turn depends on the ground chosen, the massing and marching, the knowledge of when to join in and when to avoid battle. Every science has its field and its range of problems. Its success is in great part one of methodology. Aesthetics is hampered by heterogeneous material ranging from beauty embodied in art to the creative processes that call it into being; from social to personal values; from origins to aims; from broad aesthetic types to highly individualized technique and effects. In such a situation only the readiest shifting and combining can be of service. What often happens, however, is that the aesthetician, in response to some bias, commits himself to one method, inflexibly used, and either forces everything into its scheme or limits himself to material to which it naturally applies. Kant's *Critique of the Power of Judgment* is an illustration of the first procedure; anthropological aesthetics, of the second.

The leading methods of aesthetics must be passed in re-

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view; their nature marked and their history traced; and the point indicated where they may become an autocratic menace.

THE COMMONSENSE METHOD

The commonsense method takes it for granted that the quality of good art can be seen and the essentials grasped by anyone who is alert, observing, emotionally and imaginatively responsive, and not unintelligent. It is a series of markings and casual readings in the volume of art, as that volume reveals agreements and differences in the use of colors, the organization of lines, the uses of rhythm, and in artistic ideals. Some painters use a contrasted color scheme; others a tonal scheme with one dominant color delicately shaded. Which is the more effective? Does the value of a landscape vary with the size of the picture? Many of the old masters used the circle and the serpentine; Cézanne simplifies in terms of straight and broken lines. Renoir's bodies are given a plastic rounding. Does painting gain by such a sculptural technique? His trees and shrubs are bursts of color and rhythm; accurately observed they are not; neither are Turner's castles. Ought surfaces in sculpture to be smooth and color in painting clear, persuasive, and pure? How much of his compactness and incisiveness does Dante owe to the closed verse-form he uses? What of the color schemes and favorite designs of this or that painter? These are samples of such questioning observation.

The method is an old one. Aristotle uses it when he says that beauty must have a certain magnitude since we do not call very small things beautiful; much of his dramatic criticism and many of his remarks on the epic are nothing but commonsense comment of a shrewd and direct type. Longinus illustrates it when he enumerates the qualities of the

sublime, the frigid, the bombastic, or when he contrasts the oratory of Demosthenes and Cicero. No Homeric controversies can in any way impair the value of his contrast of the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey*. He is constantly saying things worthwhile in the spirit of an appreciative observer and analyst, and marking the here and there of beauty; but he never gets to the point of developing a general theory. The method may be seen in most instructive form in the work of certain eighteenth century Englishmen:—Hogarth, Reynolds, Lord Kaimes, and Burke. These men all kept in close touch with art; they studied the practice of painters and sculptors and poets; they observed and suggested. Burke states that smoothness, small size, and a variety of curves mark beautiful objects. Hogarth selects regularity, unity, variety; and justifies his choice of the serpentine as the line of beauty by pointing to its use in Raphael. Lord Kaimes stresses proportion and order as marks of beauty, and vastness as a mark of the sublime.

What is the value of such a method? It starts at the right point—art in its single creations—and adopts the right attitude—that of an interested observer. If sublime objects are usually vast and beautiful objects smooth and delicate or if, as Bergson maintains, the comic is not found outside the sphere of the human, why not say so and make the most of such empirical markings off and commonsense orientations? It is the only method available in some problems; and it plays a not unimportant part in even so ambitious a work as Volkelt's *System der Aesthetik*. It is often all there is to art criticisms. But there are dangers lurking in the method. It tends to stop short of a science and a philosophy of the beautiful.

Commonsense is uncritical of its data; it is superficial in its observations and fragmentary, and too easily contented in its analysis. Resting its case on common impressions, it tells us that the circle is the most beautiful figure; that

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squares are more pleasing than triangles and curves more pleasing than straight lines; it points to the disquieting effect of certain sounds and colors, and to the attractiveness of certain designs and color combinations. But these facts must be tested and verified; and this cannot be done except under a system of scientific controls such as an experimental psychological method offers. Otherwise they are little more than reasonable guesses.

Again, the commonsense method is too neglectful of philosophical implications and too slack in its thinking. As Thomas Reid, the commonsense philosopher, suggests, it may be impossible to discover a common element in the beauties of the several arts; but such scepticism requires a most careful grounding. Certain problems of aesthetics—the relation of art to life, the nature of the tragic or the comic, the aims and methods of idealism—are definitely philosophical; and every one of its problems, however concrete and detached they may appear to be, imperiously calls for the penetrating, supplementing, and unifying activities of the philosopher. One problem cannot be raised without raising a host of others. Artists have understood this:—Leonardo in his note-books; Hebbel in his diaries; Whistler and Rodin in their remarks on painting and sculpture. The critic and the aesthetician ought to see that only in this way can they avoid a truncated aesthetics or a “commonplace book” of facts and questionable reflection!¹

THE PHILOSOPHICAL METHOD

The philosophical method ranges from enfolding, illuminating thought applied to single problems, to a world for-

¹ Lessing, a keen observer and thoroughgoing analyst, is always in search of general points of view. In the *Hamburgische Dramaturgie* he is not content with casual criticisms, but pushes on to the profoundest problems of tragedy. In the *Laocoon* he has built out constructively the scattered and superficial material he found in Burke, Kaimes, and others. In both

mula, comprehensive and consistently held to, which is to serve as a key to the understanding of the facts and problems of aesthetics. It is the first in Nietzsche, Romain Rolland, and Remy de Gourmont; the second in writers like Plato, Hegel, and Croce. Both ends have their opportunities and their dangers. Nietzsche rises to art as flashily and capriciously as a trout to a fly; the waters of his reflection show swift currents and pools, swirls and eddies, clear depths and foam, and not a few tangles and rocks. He combines the virtues of boldness and reach with the vice of inconsistent, uncorrelated thinking.

A world formula as a key to aesthetics has come to be distrusted. We are too intent on keeping close to the facts of experience to accept sweeping discussions of absolute beauty, reality, ideals; and to enjoy a ghostly singlestick contest among the clouds. If after the manner of Wolff feeling is defined as confused thought, and experience is intellectualized in a high-handed manner, the burden of this original sin must rest heavily on aesthetics. Or if the latter is forced within the frame of the Kantian critical philosophy, and the dichotomy of rational self and sense self is driven into the problem of the sublime, a barren formalism and a twisting of facts result. Plato, Hegel, Schopenhauer, and Bergson all show, in one way or another, the dangers of a world philosophy autocratically used in construing the facts of aesthetic experience.

There is no discounting Plato's knowledge of art or the delicacy and quickness of his response to beauty. He is a student of the technique of music, if a somewhat unsympathetic critic of its innovations. He shows flashes of insight in his remarks on poetry, painting, and sculpture. But even the hastiest reading of the *Republic* and the *Laws*

cases we may quarrel with the result—his theories stand in need of revision—but we ought to applaud the attempt to combine what is valuable in the commonsense method with something that is quite as necessary.

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reveals him discussing art as a moralist or a metaphysician. When he assumes the role of a moralist, he takes his stand on empirical ground—the observed effects of various types and forms of art. Certain kinds of music evoke amorous, others, martial moods; vocal music is to be preferred to instrumental, for it can readily be made the carrier of religious or patriotic ideas and feelings, as in community choruses; Homer and the comic poets are demoralizing; tragedy “waters” instead of starving the passions. These judgments are in turn bound up with a general theory of what human nature is and society ought to be. Back of his attacks on tragedy is the belief that to incite and indulge the passions is to slip into a primitive, pre-rational mode of living. When he writes as a metaphysician he forces on art his theory of reality and a sharp sundering of the two worlds, of eternal types, and of appearance. Not only does he limit art to this second world of everyday experience and deny it the power to render or interpret reality, but discredits it still further by holding it to be an imperfect copy of this imperfect world—a system, in fact, of surface illusions. He goes to the lengths of attempting a metaphysical classification of the arts. Plato’s theory of absolute beauty has little to do with art; it takes us straight to the devotional exercises of a great idealist—and leaves us there.

Hegel vindicates the dignity of art and, in opposition to Plato, assigns it the task of revealing reality in sensuous form. He defines beauty as *Geist*, or Spirit, shining through and illumining the world of sense. He substitutes for Plato’s immobile world of Ideas a developmental theory of reality and devises a method which allows an ingenious use of concrete materials. But is it not, after all, a strange treatment he gives to art? There is something at once fascinating and disconcerting in the spectacle of this intellectual giant, so fond of dramatic interplays and com-

plications, footing the intricate path of the dialectic method and dragging along an art bound hand and foot and burdened with metaphysics. Many of his aesthetic theories are of value. His analysis of symbolic and romantic art is worthwhile; his theory of tragedy is illuminating; his discussion of the artist and of the sources and means of artistic expression repays close study. But the twist of an extreme philosophical method is undeniably present. No patient student of the history of art will accept the Hegelian method of classifying and setting in motion the several arts; no careful and sympathetic analyst of beauty, as it is so individually and variedly revealed in works of art, will weight himself at the outset with such a definition of beauty as Hegel gives. The work of men like Vischer, Carrière, and Rosenkranz reveals the disastrous results of Hegelianizing aesthetics.

Schopenhauer, with an entirely different world formula as his key, commits the like mistake of forcing on aesthetics an uncongenial and disconcerting method. Three theories of his may be cited in proof: his theory of tragedy in terms of resignation, which is untrue to the facts of experience; his fantastic criticism of still life painting as stimulating instead of suppressing the will; his analysis of classical architecture in terms of an undisguised struggle between support and burden.

Bergson, too, illustrates the dangers of the philosophical method. In his study of the comic he lays claim to walking the way of empiricism. He means to observe disinterestedly the many types of the comic, and to get what he can from such intellectual watchfulness. His selection and interpretation of facts are everywhere dominated by the contrast between the living and the inert, between life, a non-repeating series, and mechanism, a series whose very essence is repetition.

THE CULTURAL METHOD

The term is meant to include the older method of Taine and the newer method of Grosse, Groos, and other social students of art. Old or new, the method sets itself the task of studying art as a thing physically and socially conditioned. It sets itself against philosophy and turns to science. Art has its roots in social life: what it is and what it bears depend on the nature of the soil, on such cultivation as is given by custom and tradition, and on the favoring trend of taste. Why then not make a scientific survey of these influences?

Taine was the first to make the attempt consistently and on a large scale. In offering a "botanizing" theory of art, he makes much of four influences: *race*, *climate*, *milieu*, and the peculiar bent, or *genius* of the artist. No work of art, be it a painting, a drama or a novel, can be understood apart from the individual genius who created it, and the race that is active in and through him; apart also from the climate, the intellectual and social cast of the age, and the prevailing taste. In response to what he considered a scientific ideal and method, Taine attempted to seize upon the cultural influences in English literature and in the great schools of painting.

It may at once be granted that race, climate, milieu, and genius are determinants of the character of art. Winckelmann, a lover of art in the concrete and a scientific student not given to generalities, was forced to consider climate and political and social conditions in his history of art. At this point or that, in the study of Greek tragedy, in the appreciation of Dutch painting or of medieval architecture, in the understanding of Chinese poetry or of the Hindu drama, a wide cultural orientation is necessary.

Unfortunately three at least of these determinants, race, climate, and genius, are too indefinite to be of much use.

The same race and climate have produced artists amazingly different; and genius appears sometimes as the exquisite flower of taste gained by the process of natural selection of which Taine speaks, sometimes capriciously, a law to itself. As for the *milieu*, or social setting, it is, at the point where Taine uses it, too complex to be of much value. So various are the forces at work in modern society, so different is their impact on different human material, and their penetrating power, that art movements of all types and radically contrasted art works are possible in the same cultural setting. The remedy would be to carry investigation back to simpler social situations, but Taine lacks interest in and knowledge of primitive art. He insists that it is his purpose "to realize not an ode but a law," but his theory is only quasi-scientific. At its heart there is a good deal of rhetoric, not so much as there is in Schiller, Herder, Croce, and Faure, but still too much.

Within the last fifty years the social sciences have forced a reinterpretation of the term culture. Empirical in point of view and method, they have moved away from the large formulas and brilliant rhetoric of a Schiller or a Hegel and from the uncritically scientific interpretations of a Taine as well. They show an interest in the early stages of cultural development—crude art is not cast aside—and they have the advantage of a mass of material, carefully gathered and inspected, which may be used to give content, point, and color to the reading of the culture of this or that group, this or that age. Theirs is the further advantage of an increased knowledge of human dynamics—of impulses and interests as they interrelatedly shape and sway human life. They have gone to school with modern biology and have adopted the genetic method.

One important result of this advance as it affects aesthetics has been a marked interest shown in primitive art, as that art is related to early cultural conditions and to later

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and more advanced artistic forms. Grosse's *The Beginnings of Art* is a good example of this interest and of a new scientific sociological and ethnological method. Not only is light thrown on one specific problem, that of the origins of art; the book is controlled throughout by an ideal of a scientific biology of culture and reveals the use of a genetic analysis of the facts of experience. One cannot imagine Grosse taking pleasure in the botanizing excursions, vague and ambitious, of Taine or having much confidence in the cultural mesh-bags of Schiller, Croce, or Faure, through which facts are constantly slipping. He is too scientific for that—too intent on the check-up of experience. When he studies the dance he distinguishes its early mimetic and gymnastic types and sees them in relation to definite customs and beliefs and as expressive of impulses and feelings. Groos in *The Plays of Man* shows a like advance over the theories of Schiller and Spencer. It is one thing to say that man is wholly man only when he plays and to interpret art as *Spieltrieb*; it is quite another thing to trace in detail the playful activities of man and of the lower animals, show significant variants, as in the dramatic games of children, and to relate this playful activity to anticipatory instincts of use in serious living or to survivals of what was once of service to life. It is one thing to generalize with Spencer, quite another to demand and furnish verification in detail.

Art is to be read as part of a social text, which in turn is to be studied in the spirit of a painstaking scholar. The application of this method to aesthetics has resulted in large gain. Its successes are, however, most striking in the simpler and earlier forms of art. Thus may a war mask or totem pole be studied or a bit of pattern in its modifications and migrations, or a tribal dance, like the Snake Dance of the Hopi Indians. But when social influences are many, and art is advanced and personally colored, the method

either slips back to its older, vague form or vainly seeks help from biological guesses, as bold as they are questionable. In such a situation the only hope lies in using the cultural method only where it can be effectively used, and in showing a willingness to be as flexible in method as aesthetics is varied in content.

THE EXPERIMENTAL METHOD

The experimental method may be roughly defined as the commonsense method made scientific by greater care in selecting and interpreting, and by the use of methods and appliances which allow a more minute, accurate, and searching study of art material and aesthetic impressions. Both methods are empirical and unembarrassed; both operate by means of introspection, observation, and analysis. Certain glaring faults in the first method are avoided in the second. Suppose I say of a certain well-known picture, "I like it"; and then look for the sources of my enjoyment in the painting. I observe balanced grouping, graceful curves, color harmonies and contrasts; and I respond to the subject and its emotional associations. To what degree do all these contribute to my enjoyment? In order to answer this question I look within and try to discover the inwardness of my response. But if I do that and only that, I am caught within a single mood—and moods change. I neither observe exhaustively nor am able to escape the capricious influences of the moment. If I seek to standardize my enjoyment by comparing my responses at different times, I have gone but a little way, for they are, after all, my responses, and, individually colored as they are, may not be shared by others. If I interview these others and seek some sort of agreement, I am exposed to the "personal fallacy" and to an uncritical acceptance of the vague enthusiasms and biased judgments I meet. I am still moving on

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the plane of the commonsense method and am paying the penalty. I cannot disentangle associations that carry me to the heart of a picture from such as hurry me away from it; I cannot discover the true value of a line, color, or compositional scheme.

If I am to force my way to a better method and a less subjective understanding of art, I must devise some type of experimental control. The first control that suggests itself is exhaustive analysis of the work of art itself. Observe color relations, measure distances, plot curves, trace ratios. Such a method, if judiciously used, clears away subjectivities; reveals the technique and often the aim of a picture or a piece of sculpture; and opens the way to a wider, comparative study of art. But it has its dangers. It may easily become too objective in the sense of overlooking visual illusions, personal impressions and preferences, and the part these play in the free, creative activities of art. Art, as it is created and enjoyed, is a psychological experience. A purely mathematical method may easily lead to a barren schematization as thoroughly right and as thoroughly wrong as a musical notation which awaits the interpretative stressing of a master.

The method of experimental psychology does not neglect this fact of preference. To Fechner belongs most of the credit of pioneer work in experimental aesthetics. In 1855 Zeising published *Aesthetische Forschungen*, a book whose title and table of contents seem to promise a scientific aesthetics. It turns against Hegel, contains a detailed analysis of aesthetic types, and offers studies in simple geometrical forms, in symmetry and proportion, in sound and rhythm. His aim is "to investigate beauty in the spirit of the student of the natural sciences, and to trace its causes in time and space relations, material and formal conditions; causes which produce the various effects of various aesthetic material." Pages 165-187, taken in conjunction with an

earlier essay of Zeising's, *Neue Lehre von den Proportionen des Menschlichen Körpers* (1854), gives an interesting and in many respects valuable analysis of the Golden Section Ratio. But all this promising material is too deeply embedded in philosophical terms and classifications.

It was Fechner who took the decisive step. In an early essay, *Ueber die Frage des goldnen Schnittes* (1865), he presents "certain empirical facts" against Zeising's over-emphasis on the Golden Section Ratio; in another essay, *Ueber das Assoziationsprinzip* (1866), he makes a study of the associative factor in aesthetic experience; in *Zur experimentalen Aesthetik* (1872) he develops his method. All this, and much more of the same kind, is taken up into his *Vorschule der Aesthetik* (1876). Modern experimental aesthetics has rejected many of Fechner's conclusions and has advanced by many steps the technique of experimentation, but the point of view and the way of going about problems remain. It is therefore worthwhile to watch Fechner at his work.

Fechner cut out of white cardboard ten rectangles of the same area, ranging from the ratio 1:1, the square, to the ratio 2:5, a long narrow rectangle. One of these figures embodied the Golden Section Ratio, 21:34. They were submitted during a course of several years to a few hundred persons of both sexes, who were asked to express their preferences independently of use and other associations. The judgments were carefully tabulated, and it was discovered that the peak of the curve was in the neighborhood of the Golden Section Ratio, the preferences sloping sharply downwards at both extremes. Fechner was too careful an investigator to stop at this point. He studied various objects in common use, books, visiting cards, portfolios, stamps and objects commonly seen, as picture frames—and discovered that the square was seldom used and that the ratios close to the Golden Section Ratio were frequent. He submitted

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to children in nurseries the square and the Golden Section rectangle, watched their reaching out—changed the figures from right to left to guard against right and left-handedness—and discovered no decisive preference.

What if the rectangle under consideration is a picture frame? Will not the pleasing ratio of height and breadth vary with the subject of the picture? Fechner tests this question experimentally. He puts pictures into classes: religious, mythological, genre, landscape and seascape, still life; compares examples of each class and tabulates results. Other illustrations of Fechner's method are: his study of vowel-color; his careful separation of the direct and associational factors in art; and his analysis of the direct values of sound, color, line, and of the effect of associations.

With this scientific control in terms of fact always in mind, Fechner is unwilling to reduce aesthetic experience to one principle or law. He formulates six: the principles of the aesthetic threshold, of summation, of unity in variety, of harmony and truth, of clearness, of association—and these are not given as an exhaustive list.

Since Fechner's time experimental aesthetics has developed rapidly. The technique of investigation has been improved, and the range of experimentation, widened. The improvement in technique can be traced to the invention of various laboratory devices. Revolving disks with color segments allow the study of contrast and fusion; eye-movements are studied by means of photography²; reaction time

² The following may serve as an illustration of how aesthetics benefits by certain technical improvements. Curves are supposed to be more pleasing than straight or irregular lines. That is an assertion on the part of commonsense which must be put to the test and, if valid, must be backed by some theory that accounts for the facts. One such theory offered was that the eye-ball, owing to the peculiar way it is set in and controlled by the muscles, works most easily in curves. But photography has shown that the eye moves not in curves but in very irregular broken lines. (cf. Valentine, *An Introduction to the Experimental Psychology of Beauty*, pp. 44-46).

is fixed; emotional effects are measured by means of contrivances which register heart-beat, breathing, dilatation and constriction of blood-vessels; the motor side of consciousness is studied at first hand. The questionnaire method has been bettered by the guarding against distorting influences of all sorts. On the basis of this improved technique accurate and ambitious experimentation has been going on. Studies have been made in rhythm, in musical intervals, in concord and dissonance; there have been numerous contributions to the aesthetics of color. What is the effect of single colors or of differences in brightness, intensity, and shade? What are the laws of effective combining? to what extent do temperature sensations (hot and cold colors) and kinaesthetic sensations (light and heavy colors) influence our response to color? Attempts have been made to study in children and adults alike reactions to lines and simple space-forms and to reduce to scientific order the time and space elements in aesthetic experience. One aesthetic theory, that of empathy, has been built on motor responses. The experimental method has been applied to the comic, and to complex rhythmic and associational problems of poetry.

No one can deny great value to the experimental method. It has put at our disposal means of testing assertions concerning the elements or essentials of beauty. But at present it is not perfected; and it probably can never wholly escape the looseness and vagueness of questionnaires or deal successfully with complex problems such as the enjoyment of a symphony or tragedy. Even the greatest care in the putting of questions and tabulating of results leaves untouched all manner of individual associations. Is not the question: Does this color please? indefinite in the sense that it may point in the direction of either the agreeable or the beautiful? and are we not dependent for an answer on the uncritical mind of the person questioned? Laboratory devices are used as correctives, but while more delicate and more

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ingenious machinery may be looked for, it is difficult to anticipate contrivances capable of handling effectively the more complex aesthetic experiences. The experimentalist admits that values change when they are differently combined. Fechner allows for what he calls "*kombinatorische Mitbestimmung*." Many of the laws of combination—of color and sounds—have been formulated. Useful experimental work of this kind may be added to. To what extent, for example, is the pleasingness of a color in draperies influenced by the texture of the cloth? Such matters are comparatively simple and may be dealt with successfully; not so the intricacies of poetry, where the experimental method, however patient and inventive, can accomplish little unaided.

The aesthetician then, if he is wise, will neither spurn nor employ exclusively any single method. He will use the philosophical, commonsense, cultural, and experimental methods, shifting choice and emphasis with the nature of his problems, and will thus develop an alert and flexible technique of observation, analysis, and thoughtful generalization.

THE ORIGINS OF ART

It is the task of the historian of art to piece together the chronicle of art; trace changes in technique and in ideals; record the interrelations of schools and their ascending and descending lines; ground the work of the artist in the character of his age and in the manner of his working; follow the ever-changing struggle between tradition and revolt. In this he receives valuable aid from many sources. With every decade of patient upturning of the soil, the archaeologist is making the story of art more complete. The excavations in Egypt, Asia Minor, Crete, and Greece; the explorations of caves and sifting of gravel-beds; the study of chiseled flint and scratched slate or ivory; the careful piecing together of bits of pottery—all this has set the formative arts in a truer light. Crude beginnings and transitions have been revealed; so have struggles with a recalcitrant material like stone and with the puzzles of facial expression, side-views, and perspective; so have technical processes. Greek coins and gems have supplied many gaps in the history of Greek sculpture and have made the study of modified copying and amalgamation of types easier; Greek vase-paintings not only show a gradual mastering of contour drawing, shading, and posing, but hint at the nature and development of painting itself.¹ Further help is necessary. The labors of the historian, the ethnologist, and the anthropologist must be called on, if this collected material is to be rightly interpreted. It matters little whether the question is one of the ancient palaces and temples of Egypt, Peru or

¹ For light on technical processes cf. Figures 2 and 4 in E. Pottier, *Douris and the Painters of Greek Vases*, N. Y., 1916.

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Mexico, or of Greek athletic sculpture, or of the symbolism of Indian rugs and pottery; a correct reading is impossible without historical orientation and a knowledge of customs such as totemism and animism, and of all sorts of beliefs, ideas, and practices of magic. Two examples may serve to show how essential this social interpretation of art is. Egyptian sculpture and painting can be understood only in the light of religious beliefs and burial customs. The statuettes and paintings of the Tomb of Ti reflect curious Egyptian ideas of appanage and sustenance with reference to the dead, and offer the setting of a serious problem to the artist—that of making the retinue and workers of the mighty dead at once individual and typical of their class and work.² Again, in the study of decorative patterns, one might hastily conclude from the geometrical character of borders in Cretan and early Greek pottery, in Oriental and Chinese rugs, and in African and Australian masks and tattooing, that the intricate designs of modern art go back to an early delight in purely geometrical forms such as the circle, the triangle, the square, the angle, the sloping line. But there is nowhere greater need for discrimination. Zigzag lines on early Greek vases are nothing but zigzag lines, but zigzag lines in Indian rugs are symbols of the lightning. Instances of Chinese symbolism are the Knot of Destiny, the circle as the emblem of eternity, the cloud as the emblem of immortality; of Caucasian symbolism, the Latch Hook, which, like the old and well-nigh universal Swastika, is the symbol of good luck, and Solomon's Seal. To this symbolism the anthropologist and ethnologist hold the key. Again, many patterns which on the surface seem to be purely geometrical are cases of schematization of animal forms. Here are a few: the tarantula, the crab, the snake, the lizard, the kneeling camel, fishes, and birds. This schematization either marks the simplifying and modifying of animal forms for

² Cf. Maspero, *Art in Egypt*, (1912) Figures 15-29 and text, pp. 15-18.

the sake of fitting them into a decorative pattern suggestive of continuity and unity, or it is an instance of debased observation and of shorthand methods in art. Nor must the folk-lorist and folk-psychologist go unheeded, for there is in many of these designs an early delight in life and its various forms and forces: in the cresting life of the sea—the Chinese and Greek fret;—in flowers—rosettes and medallions—in sun and moon—the Sunburst and the Crescent—in running water and the growth and movements of animals.

The aesthetician, in turn, is dependent on the historian of art, and on all the others.³ He must accept what expert opinion provides in the way of facts and adjust his theories in response to any new discovery or widening of experience. He has, of course, his own problems and his own wider use of materials. He travels the high road of theory, and he ought to do it circumspectly, with a patient understanding of what in the way of surveying and cultivating and masonry-work has been done by the special sciences. If he contents himself with a roving glance and sweeping gesture, he fails as lamentably in his way as does the archaeologist or ethnologist in his, if he lives in some one problem, as a maggot in a cheese, feeding blindly on the pulp of facts.

As a purely scientific problem, the question: How did art begin and how did it develop? is at present unanswerable, for the record begins abruptly, with a baffling lack of wider cultural facts, and proceeds spasmodically. But is it not

³ Winckelmann's *History of Ancient Art* (1764) illustrates this problem of interdependence. It is a remarkable piece of work: solid; bristling with firsthand analyses and observations, bearing on the technical treatment of eyes, forehead, hair, costume; thorough in its use of ancient sources; suggestive in its attempt to relate art to race, climate, and social conditions; brilliant in its divination of the characteristics of the Four Styles. But all this equipment and reference to what in the light of nineteenth century discoveries seems a pitifully meagre store of Greek sculpture did not keep Winckelmann the historian from a serious misdating of the *Laocoon* and Winckelmann the aesthetician from a serious misreading of the spirit of Greek sculpture.

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possible to take the problem of the origins of art in a larger sense and to trace, psychologically and sociologically, the interplay of forces to which art owes its being?

Art is very old and very human. The earliest extant art is that of the cave-dwellers, and, judging by what remains of it, it reached its highest point of excellence in Spain and Southern France. On the low dark walls of the cave of Altamira, and in many other caves, were found paintings in red, yellow, brown, and black of various animals—the reindeer, the wild boar, the bison, the mammoth. In outline, in shading, and in the rendering of animal motion these pictures show a high level of skill. There are several layers of them; the later artist covered over the work of his predecessor. This and the fact that some of the earlier paintings are clumsy and sketchy allow the partial deciphering of a long period of artistic endeavor. In beds of gravel were found stones scratched with the contours of animals, bits of reindeer horn and ivory cut into and shaped to resemble horses' heads, crouching deer, huge figures of horses sculptured in the round, and a few representations of the human figure. The age of this art has been variously set as from 30,000 to 100,000 years. The dolmens, menhirs, and circles of granite blocks found in Brittany, England, and Sweden reveal architecture in its infancy. The surfaces of many of these stone pillars are covered with intricate linear patterns. Bits of glazed pottery, polished stone axes, gold ornaments and hammered bronze implements testify to the development of the lesser arts. It matters little what is chosen,—an axe or a drinking cup, bronze armor dug up from the peat bogs of Denmark, a flint knife, the contents of an Egyptian tomb, the Swedish plaque reproduced by Reinach, with its eight point star centre, its design of concentric circles, and its rolling circle borders—everywhere art yields itself as something primitive man created, delighted in, and related to his everyday practical life. Quite as

striking as its long history is its human quality. Children scribble likenesses of trees and houses and play dramatic games with all the *verve* and finish of an artist; the camp-fire becomes the rallying point of singing and dancing; much artistry goes into the weaving of a basket or rug, the smoothing of a paddle, the fashioning of a head-piece of feathers; the story of a hunt is put on a piece of walrus tusk by the Eskimo, on a dressed skin by the Indian, on a bronze dagger, with gold and silver work, by the Cretan, on huge, modeled wall spaces by the proud Assyrian. Everywhere art is created and enjoyed in response to common human needs. There is no more fruitful source of errors of all sorts than the interpretation of art as something without a history and without a range wider than the creative work of a few exceptionally gifted individuals.

What are the beginnings of art? What peculiarities of human nature make its creation so common and its enjoyment so spontaneous and so persistent? Intellectual economy suggests a single explanatory principle—utility, play, sex, self-expression,—but such economy means a narrow and warped theory, too high a price for any liberal-minded and observant student of art to pay. It is impossible to run back the various types of art to one source; and it is quite likely that art sprang up in different localities and among different peoples in response to different sets of conditions. There are many sources to the stream of art; their combining, the slope of the land, the nature of the soil, and the seasonal rains determine the volume of the stream and the velocity of the current as it cuts a deep and narrow bed between cliffs or sluggishly takes a wandering and spreading course. The whole river-system cannot be explained by a bit of trickling water in the mountains; the system of art, fed and feeding, changing form and velocity with changing conditions, cannot be explained in terms of a single determinant, physical or social or psychological.

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An open mind and no favors! ought to be our motto in a review of the many determinants of early art.

UTILITY

It is one of the commonplaces of aesthetics to contrast the tensional response to pressing practical needs with the calm, disengaged, disinterested pursuit and enjoyment of beauty. The contrast is made plausible by taking art at its remotest point from practical life, at its culmination in a poem, a sonata, a picture. But even in the lesser arts, such as weaving, pottery, cabinet-making, silversmith work, where the product is to be serviceable there is a loving elaboration of workmanship on the part of the artist and an enjoyment of the play of form and color on the part of him who responds, which cannot be put to the score of utility.

Is it possible to take our sense of the beautiful, which in its higher forms is so forgetful of the everyday practical world and so wrapped up in an imaginative life of its own, analyze it, and show the useful as the original determinant in its forms and estimates? The attempt has been made repeatedly. Berkeley and Alison have tried to show that what is called beautiful is in some way useful; that, for instance, such architectural forms,—door-frames, wall and window spaces, arches, flat or sloping roofs,—are chosen and held pleasing as have been found most convenient and useful.

With the development of the genetic method and the comparative study of the art and culture of primitive peoples, the theory has reappeared in a strengthened and more ambitious form. Attention is drawn to the fact that the later, freer types of art go back to earlier technical processes and industrial needs—weaving, pottery, and the construction of shelters are cited as examples—that painting goes back to the sign language of pictographs; and dancing, to socially useful pantomime; that groups turn to their

own use the artistic gifts of their members; and that social life, taken in the large, confesses the need of expressing and maintaining itself through the useful activities and pleasures of art.

Facts such as these cannot be ignored. Every advance in ethnology and folk-psychology reveals art closely related to the aggressively self-protective life of the group. Amulets are worn to ward off evil, and masks to frighten; war dances are to rouse the fighting spirit; rowing and harvesting songs are to make common work easy; poetry and music speak with the voice of common exploits whose memory is to be kept; shape in a throwing-stick and symmetry in a paddle serve a practical purpose; rugs, bowls, totem poles have their definite uses. But there are indications also of a spontaneity and a surplus of pleasure which cannot be explained either by special practical purposes or by the larger purposes of the group. No doubt the process of *aesthetic indirection* has had its share in changing work into play and in giving man a larger field of artistic self-expression, but it is bad psychology to trace everything back to the perception of fitness. Symmetry is enjoyed in objects where it never could have been useful; delicate shading in the colors of a rug shows a discriminating taste and workmanship far beyond anything the group expects or can make specific use of, unless—and that is begging the question—a social will to art as art is assumed and held to be useful. There is another possibility also. Utility may be taken in a comprehensive biological sense and art explained in terms of the uses of life. It is thus that Darwin relates color and sound in birds to sex, and sex to life; that Grant Allen traces the color-sense back to the animal's problem of choosing food; that McDougall explains laughter as a protective device against the pain of intense sympathy; that art is held to be one form of the will to health and power. The method of biological orientation

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is of great value, but it lends itself to serious misuses. One of these misuses may be put as follows: Everything in nature has its use; no specific use can be discovered for A or B; therefore, A or B must be explained in terms of the general purpose of maintaining and heightening life-processes. This is like assuming that nature is a universal Fairy Godmother who is constantly bestowing gifts on us; if at any time we cannot discover a specific gift, we take refuge in the thought of some general impalpable bestowal—for is she not our universal Fairy Godmother?

IMITATION

With respect to the earliest art known to us little can be gained by a reference to utility. We know nothing of the social life of the cave-men. They were hunters with very simple weapons at their disposal. Why did these men draw and shape the likenesses of animals, and fashion decoratively their simple implements? Was it to gain control over these animals in the chase and to increase the supply of game by magic means? This answer—in terms of “imitative magic”—has been suggested by Frazer, Reinach, Spearing, and others. It treads the dangerous path of analogy. It is well known that Australians and Indians entertain such a belief in the efficacy of copies and seek to ward off a dearth of game or a drought by drawing likenesses and performing incantations. Similar motives have been assigned to the cave-men; the fact that they painted chiefly edible animals and often drew arrows on their surface is used to strengthen the argument from analogy. But the argument is largely guess-work, and may easily be carried to absurd lengths. (cf. the interpretation given by Spearing in his *Childhood of Art*, p. 96, following Reinach, of the *flayed horses' heads*).

Faure suggests that these early hunters described their

kill by the vivid means of drawing and painting, but how does such a theory fit in with either the many fragmentary sketchings of heads or the careful detail work in shading? In pictographs, where animal forms are used as a sort of social currency, outline sketching is held sufficient for purposes of recognition and the forms are often debased to the point of the utmost sketchiness.

Quite another force must be reckoned with—the impulse to imitate and the pleasure in successful imitation. Two of the oldest theories of art trace it to this source. Aristotle speaks of man as an imitative animal; points to his practice, from childhood up, of drawing likenesses; and adds that man delights in recognizing the original in the copy. Our enjoyment of accurate copies of repulsive objects he cites in support of his generalization. Lucretius traces music back to the imitation of natural sounds—the song of birds, the noise of the wind among reeds. The reed-pipe of the peasant and the ripple and trill of song are man's attempts to master the variety of natural sounds. Lucretius, however, adds the restful effects of artistic exercise, and draws a vivid picture of men coming together and enjoying rhythmic improvisations. Neither theory discriminates sufficiently between creating and enjoying art. The pleasures of recognition need not presuppose a strong mimetic impulse; nor is imitation always conscious and pleasurable toned. A striking likeness is enjoyed by the artist and the onlooker alike; and the pleasure may serve as a stimulus to both. But a distinction must be made between the question: What do we enjoy in art? and the question: What impulse or group of impulses is the cause of art? It is the second question which concerns us here.

The imitative impulse is strongly at work in the first rude sketches children make of trees and houses; in the animal dances of primitive peoples; and in the earliest pre-

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historic art. The cave-men drew, painted, and carved the many animals of the chase; they caught their outline, their appearance in the round, and their movements. A sharp and alert observation marks their work. The rush of the running boar; the lumbering majesty of the mammoth; the thin, graceful foreleg of the horse; the lowered head of the bison; the stretched neck of cattle; the reindeer looking back:—all this is observed vividly and copied accurately. The detail work shows an astonishing truthfulness. The thick, long, irregular hair on the neck and back of the bison is set off from the shorter, smoother hair of the belly and flank.

The Australian paints on walls of rock or traces with charcoal on skins the likeness of the kangaroo, the crab, the shark with its companion, the pilot fish; the Bushman scratches or daubs on rocks the animals within his ken; the Eskimo works bone into the shape of sea-lions, dogs, and whales. Then there are mimetic dances, in which the dancers cover themselves with skins or feathers and imitate rhythmically, with great enjoyment and consummate skill, the characteristic movements of animals—the ostrich, the bear, the kangaroo. There are elaborate mimetic love and war dances. In the latter the thrust of spears or speeding of arrows, the rush and physical clash, the victory and the rout are enacted faithfully, to the staccato rhythms of the war cry and battle song. To these must be added other imitative poses and gestures such as the simulated movements of stalking game, of paddling a canoe, of cutting one's way through the bush.

Imitation, then, is an influence not to be neglected in any genetic theory of art; but to overplay it means a narrow and strained reading of architecture, symbolic painting, early expressionistic dancing and sculpture, and decorative art forms.

ORNAMENTATION AND DECORATION

That a decorative as well as a mimetic impulse was at work in palaeolithic art may be seen in the use of animal forms (deer, goats, heads of horses, and bulls), in throwing sticks, magic wands, and daggers. One famous dagger handle of reindeer horn shows a crouching deer, with stiff hindlegs sloping backward at an angle of forty-five degrees, hindquarters thrown up, the body sloping down to the stretched neck, the head raised to match the slope of the hindlegs and the forelegs doubled under. An admirable handle with just the right grip for the fingers! But it would not have been less admirable in a practical sense, if there had been no artistic elaboration. There is something unnatural about the pose. This must not be set down to the score of failure, for the cave-men were excellent observers and recorders of animal life. Life-likeness, however, is not their aim here: they distort in order to gain a bold decorative effect. Modern parallels are to be found in the *art nouveau*. There, in paper-cutters, weights, candlesticks, canes, the human body, flowers, and animals are all used decoratively, and in being so used are conventionalized, distorted so as to fit into a linear or curvilinear scheme. It seems plausible then to assume an early and very direct interest in decorative design and ornamental pattern. It is beside the point to refer to an accidental origin in the mechanical processes of the industrial arts. Thus it has been suggested that designs on pottery go back to thumb-prints or to the imprint of a rope left on the vessels in the process of baking, and that the use of different grasses accounts for checkered color-patterns in baskets. Whatever the first occasion, the decorative impulse is traceable in the art of every primitive people.

Primitive men everywhere use their own bodies as decora-

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tive material. Excoriation and tattooing are common; bodies are smeared with fat and colored clays till they suggest a barber's pole or a geometer's dream; teeth are blackened; ear-lobes are perforated or lengthened; lips are pulled down and noses maltreated; the head of hair is built up in all sorts of ways. Necklaces of feathers, colored beads or pebbles, and pendants of teeth are worn. Dressed skins, aprons, loin-cloths, masks are fringed, twisted, painted over, and striking decorative effects are gained. It is surprising to find the flower patterns on the draperies of Gauguin's Tahiti women, which suggest the sophisticated decorative scheme of an ultra-modern painter, matched in the photographs of South Sea Islanders.

Not only the bodies but the belongings of primitive man—such as blankets, axes, spears, shields, bows and arrows, knives, paddles, arrow-smoothers—show ornamental shaping and coloring.

Such are the facts; how are they to be interpreted? Fashion and custom doubtless play their part; and back of the custom there is often a utility value. Amulets and wands have their uses; a grotesque mask, a towering head dress, a body boldly streaked with war-paint are a challenge and a bit of bravado: they are to frighten the enemy. The elaborate dress and the intricately carved staff of the chief or medicine man are to promote group unity and provide the touch of ceremonial impressiveness so necessary to the smooth functioning of social life. Patterns, usually geometrical in type, are common in early art. There are circles and rectangles, undulating and zigzag lines, lines marching in a sort of crowded obliqueness, checkerboard patterns, curves twisting and untwisting, successions of differently tinted triangles and rhomboids. Much of this geometrical decoration serves tribal uses and is to be read in relation to tribal symbols. Circles strung at intervals along a line mark a lapse of time—some geometrical decora-

tions are nothing but schematized or debased rendering of animal forms. The most may be made of such explanations; there is still something unaccounted for. There is an original delight in symmetry and in orderly, intriguing variations of line. There is, also, the impulse to embellish all things, whether useful or not, by decorative edging or ridged carving, or by changing the heavy monotony of surfaces into the light, interlaced tracteries of filigree work. An example of this is the Maori door lintel given by Goldenweiser (*Early Civilization*, Fig. 44).

Important as this spontaneous decoration is, it is only one influence among many in the development of art. Other determinants are: self-expression; commemoration; and the irradiations of the sex-impulse.

SELF-EXPRESSION

Many a modern artist, when asked what is back of his art and why and in what sense he is an artist, gives some such answer as this: "My art is not imitation of what in nature strikes my senses, nor is it embroidery in the sense of a sorting and recombining of colors, lines, and sounds; it is my attempt to express myself creatively by giving shape to my moods, my impulses, my dreams and imaginings. The world of objects is simply my occasion, the material in which I work, my opportunity. I am in the grip of an impulse to express and project myself—I create because I must create." The sculpture of Rodin shows this impulse at work, and the letters of Wagner testify to its overmastering force. This is, if you will, a question of the psychology of the artist, but it is something more. Expressionistic art, which deliberately breaks the stabilized world of objects to bits, and re-creates it in the turbulent image of a self as chaotic in its flashes of impulse and feeling as it is aggressive in its reaching out, goes back, for inspiration and justification, to

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the grotesque statuettes, of ivory and wood, of the Kongo and the African coast, and to the weird music and dancing of the negro. This sophisticated modern revolt—so Hermann Bahr and its other champions interpret it—must be carefully distinguished from an early mentality as yet unformed and a world of crude, imperfectly shaped artistic expression. But there is in early art sufficient warrant for tracing projection and expression of self, both tribal and individual.

Many primitive dances are expressionistic rather than mimetic in character. Gymnastic dances are physical expression under excitement: witness the jumping and spinning around in Russian folk-dances, the swinging of bodies and arms, and the leaping and bounding in African and Australian dances. There is a keen enjoyment of this energetic play of one's muscles, this flinging oneself about. Self-expression invades the emotional field as well. The dancers shout, fall into improvised rhythms, burst into snatches of song; the music whips up the excitement as it parallels it. A grotesque, imaginative strain is present in sculpture and painting. Acquaintance with the material of myth, folk-tale, and legend, with masks that distort rather than imitate, and with fantastic creations in the drawings of Eskimo and Australian alike, reveals the fact that primitive man, faithful observer and imitator that he can on occasion be, persists in and enjoys building at times a world of his own—a world expressive of his own energy, his own playfulness, his own moods.

In the individual artist this expressionism is partially checked by his own collective way of feeling and thinking and by traditional patterns and symbols imposed by the tribe. But within these limits there are a great number of individual variations in the working out of a general pattern and striking opportunities for an individualized iconography of supernatural helpers and hinderers. Anthro-

pologists and ethnologists recognize this variational element. Here is a quotation from Goldenweiser, *Early Civilization*, p. 166: "We say 'expression' deliberately, for the primitive artist is not by any means as passive an imitator of traditional style or pattern as he or she is often represented to be. In those areas where careful studies of primitive art have been made, as for example, in North America, ethnologists constantly observe the great and typical variability of objects of art. Not that the tribal style is ever disregarded. The opposite is, in fact, invariably the case: the woman embroiderer of the Plains, the man carver of the Northwest Coast, the woman potter of the Southwest and embroiderer of the Iroquois and Algonquin work along well established lines of technique and design pattern. But within these fixed limits there is infinite variation, often minute, at other times radical, which cannot be explained by mere inaccuracy of reproduction due to the absence of definite measurement, but can only be accounted for by the individual technical aptitude of the artist, the peculiarity of his idiosyncrasy or the direction of his playfulness. In the Plains, for example, the minute units of the embroidery designs are combined into a great variety of more complicated patterns. New patterns of this kind are constantly originated by the women who, in this case, dream the new designs. Of course, even these dreamed designs always follow certain tribal principles of decoration and arrangement of design units. But there is room enough left for an unceasing variety of detail."

One of the simplest, and to the aesthetician most fruitful, forms of self-expression is play. In its quieter as well as in its most vigorous types it is an invasion and resetting of the external world in terms of self. When I sit down to a game of chess the two rows of men confront me with a stolid immobility. I break into this, shift them about, and use them as material for the expression of my initiative, my

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skill, my imaginative weaving of patterns of attack or defence. Any position which arises during the game is felt by me, not as something immobile and strange, but as tensing and relaxing purposes of mine—as life of my life. When I improvise an acrobatic dance, I break into the staid composure of my body with a chaotic abandon of physical energy, and then somehow give a new, personal pattern of skill and strength to this chaos. The process need not be self-conscious; and the playful shaping is as important as the outgoing energy.

Theorists like Schiller, Spencer, Nietzsche, and Groos have been struck by the resemblance between play and art, and by the element of self-expression in both. Nietzsche distinguishes between *Rauschkünstler* and *Traumkünstler*, between the Dionysian and the Apollonian artist. While the latter seeks to create a beautiful dream-world of his shaping, the former, the orgiastic artist, paints or chisels or bursts into ecstatic poetry from sheer pressure of his seething self—or dances to the notes of his own piping. He creates because he must express the fulness of his being. Backing his theory by references to biology and social history, Nietzsche points to the orgiastic character of much of early art, to the licence of festivals, and to the grotesque, energetic imagery which marks the lower levels of the history of art. Spencer explains art in terms of the expenditure of surplus energy; energy which has been stored because it could not be expended in the serious business of living. Groos, studying the plays of animals and of man, sees in their simulated activities an instinctive preparation for practical problems—a sort of anticipatory expression of the warrior or the hunter or the mother.

More complex in its motives than play is another form of self-expression:—that of projection and fusion. Man vivifies and humanizes nature; he attributes to inanimate objects his motor experiences and his moods—and his fel-

lows! He constructs a world after his own image. The tree is a dryad; rocks are petrified men; the flooding of its banks is an angry gesture on the part of the river-god; the volcano is a hot-breathing giant or a fire-spewing dragon. Folk tales in which the actors are animals show little insight into animal life as such; the animals are disguised humans with a touch of the grotesque; they talk, weep, and, what is most human of all, moralize. Again there is a sort of sympathetic projection of a man's personality into his belongings, so that when he sickens the blade of his knife turns dull. There is much of this in early magic and witchcraft, and in the mythmaking artistry of early man.⁴

Self-expression then is one of the roots of art. It is well to remember, however, that a shout, whole-souled though it be, is not yet art, ecstatic language not yet poetry, and a hurling into space or time of one's emotional experiences not yet painting or music. Art is something beyond such simple spontaneity—something disciplined by its own developing technique; and often something created and formed in response to other and equally insistent impulses.

COMMEMORATION

Commemoration may or may not be a special form of self-expression. The artist feels impelled to create, and to externalize his inner life. But he also means to build something of himself into the permanent mould of immortal verse and imperishable music. Convinced as he is of the uniqueness and worth of his impressions and experiences, he records them in his art and cheats them of their evanescence. A changing sky at sunset, the sting of a salt breeze or the white chaos of a driving, blotting snowstorm—the ecstasy of love—a lost friend or leader—a cosmic protest—

⁴ Cf. Goldenweiser's reference to the Chukchee belief in mushroom men, mice-people and earth-spirits (*Early Civilization*, pp. 202-204).

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nameless fears—moods that perplex and melt away—all this is to be immortalized. The feeling of the lastingness of their work is strong in artists⁵; so is the human craving, if not for immortality, at least for a greater permanence than life ordinarily allows. The engineer who perpetuates his vision and skill in a reclaimed desert and the man who records his initiative and courage in the building up of a large business have the feeling and the craving in a less subtle form.

Undoubtedly the desire to arrest the moment for the purpose of recording and commemorating what is felt to be of interest is back of many a poem and sculptural design. It varies with the artist and the period; and it must not be confused with the release of surcharged self-feelings or the spontaneity of play.

What then is its influence in the development of art? It is dangerous to drag in the whole sophisticated individualism of the modern artist. Primitive man exhibits an egoism as naive and direct as that of a child; and this egoism is not necessarily creative. He often seeks to perpetuate himself through the work of others. Let the sculptor catch my likeness; let the painter fill spaces with my hunting exploits; let the tribal circle hand down my name! Art there is in all these cases, but the commemorative stimulus comes from without. Nor can such a desire to stand fixed and impressive before one's self and one's fellows be made to explain the frequency and range of commemorative art.

⁵ Horace (*Bk. 3 Ode xxx*)

A monument I've achieved more strong than brass,
Soaring kings' pyramids to overpass;
Which not corroding raindrop shall devour,
Or winds that from the north sweep down in power,
Or years unnumbered as the ages flee!
I shall not wholly die!

and Shakespeare's Sonnet

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime—

There are tribal epics and tribal trophies; painted on skins or cut into stone are the records of fighting and hunting; there are shrines, burial places, public buildings, embellished landmarks of great common achievements; there are all sorts of ceremonies—pantomimic dances, processions, ablutions—all witnesses to the egoism and vanity of groups. Social life is to cut an imposing figure, and the individual is to be impressed. The pride of the group in itself is reflected in the pride the members take in it;—nothing surprising in that, since the early consciousness is essentially a group consciousness, as befits a group life. But why is this business of fixing and glorifying the life of the group done with so emphatic an artistic flourish? A stick driven in the ground might serve as a mark and the crudest tracings might serve as a record. If activities are pleasurable, they are more readily entered upon and more tenaciously remembered. But why aesthetic pleasures? No stretching will allow us to leave out of the reckoning utility, play, sex, and other motives. Not all art is monument-making, and not even all in monument-making is self-expression or self-perpetuation on the part of individual and group.

A sort of biological registering must be taken into account in explaining the commemorative side of art. Physically and psychologically the sex impulse registers itself in physical union, biologically it registers itself in offspring. The artistic imagination and dexterity of man registers itself physically and psychologically in projection and in the shaping of inert material; biologically it scores in a permanence which links the present with the future—as offspring link the present with the future.

THE SEX-IMPULSE AND ITS IRRADIATIONS

There is a theory that art is sex. The artistic impulse is interpreted as the sex-impulse either in its adolescent un-

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directed restlessness and excitement or in its compensatory radiating satisfactions in dress, taste, religion, art or in its rebellion against the disciplinary control of the group and the individual alike. Why then not explain the development of art in terms of an adolescent, an irradiating, a rebellious sex-consciousness?

What are the facts on which such a theory builds? The simplest and most obvious fact is the use of art in sex rivalry. Not only ornamentation and decoration, but dress itself is used as a sex stimulant, and as an attraction and a challenge. When a man courts he tries to please, and he pleases by showing his disturbed condition in a love-song, and his strength and skill in an athletic dance, by being more striking, more colorful, more imposing than any of his rivals. Women lure by showing their skill in the weaving of rugs or baskets, by singing and dancing, and by the exploitation of their physical charms. Erotic dances and songs are common; so is erotic symbolism in tattooing. Sex characteristics primary and secondary, are grossly exaggerated in very early specimens of sculpture and painting. Again art appears in close connection with religious ceremonies which are frankly sexual in imagery and technique. Phallic worship and religious prostitution may be cited as examples. A dormant or blocked sensuality finds an outlet in great social gatherings such as the Spring Festival in Greece, the Saturnalia and the Carnival in Rome, and in the repulsive abandon of such ceremonies as are described in *Batouala*—primitive negro sexuality described by a negro.

Such facts must not be overlooked in explaining the throbbing quality of the lyric, the origins of Aristophanic comedy, the meaning of many pantomimic dances, the exuberance of Rabelais, and the eroticism of Wagner, and of the "fleshly school of poetry." Directly or in overtones, sex has its part to play in artistic creation, of the most subtle as well as the most direct type. But much of art is untouched by it;—and

this applies especially to the epic and the bulk of architecture and painting. Nor is all art—as some Freudians would have it—the irruption into consciousness of chaotic, inarticulate sex feelings, rebellious because thwarted, slipping by the censor and into art in the disguise,—of the Oedipus Complex and the Hamlet Complex. The fantastic explanations of art material by the Freudians are themselves a case of folk-lore and sex magic, of interest, not to the seeker of truth, but to the folk-lorist and the analyst of the Freudian Complex.

Art is something which is constantly creative and re-creative in the activities of groups and in the life and work of gifted individuals. When and in response to what forces it first appeared in the life of man is an unanswerable question. It may well have sprung up in different localities as the result of different influences. But it is by no means an unimportant matter to trace in its earlier and fresher stages the manifold causes and influences which account for this eternally interesting and significant process of creation and re-creation. Utility, sex, the impulses to adorn, to imitate, to express oneself in the sense of projecting a fluctuating life into the immobility of nature, and to commemorate in the sense of giving to oneself and one's own a striking and immobile distinction and permanence such as nature only occasionally provides—these are among the forces. To select one and only one and to sacrifice to it all the others is to practise an economy so stringent and narrow that the search for truth itself is regarded a luxury to be avoided.

PART TWO
THE AESTHETIC RESPONSE

THE AESTHETIC RESPONSE

The artist often insists that the great mass of people are incapable not only of appreciating good art and understanding what he is about, but of responding aesthetically at all. Their eyes and ears are untrained; and their minds run off into the world of morals, of business, of science. Has he not as an interpreter and creator isolated, given form to, and made self-sufficient impressions which ordinarily go unnoticed in the amalgam of practical experience? and are these line and color values of his to disappear once more in the common mixture of life?

The problem here is not how the artist creates, of the manner of his conceiving and shaping, and of the canons of criticism to be applied to his work. It is the more general one of discovering what is implied in the artist's response to nature and in an emerging world of art, and in the peculiar response on the part of an observer or hearer which he has a right to demand.

In dealing with this problem of aesthetic experience and its creative and appreciative aspects it is well to insist that (1) creation and appreciation cannot be sharply sundered; and (2) the aesthetic response is not a magical something called forth by art and art alone and sufficiently simple and uniform to be marked by two or three adjectives. There is an underlying likeness between the way the artist responds to nature and shapes according to his needs and the way the onlooker responds either to nature or to what the artist gives him. There is this much truth in the position of the representatives of creative criticism: every act of appreciation is in part a sympathetic re-creation of the artist's meaning, in

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part an expression of the critic's own creative personality. Again, there are personal differences within the field of genuine aesthetic experience which must not be overlooked. There are variations in emotional and imaginative suggestibility; and there are the well-known visual, tactile, and motor types. Thus Vernon Lee's response to a Greek vase is so peculiarly motor that few could share it; still it cannot on that account be ruled out as non-aesthetic. Nor can art be neatly blocked off from life and studied in isolation. The paintings in a gallery are highly specialized products of artistic effort and technique; they demand, but cannot always command, loyalty to an art spirit. But even they, as works of art, are of the stuff of life and embody part of its spirit. If, however, aesthetic experience is to be studied in a broad and sympathetic manner, it is necessary to go back to where art and life run together, and to where the response, creative as well as appreciative, is less highly specialized and less sharply marked.

THE GENESIS OF THE AESTHETIC RESPONSE

Imagine a man, with little else than a gun and an axe in his possession, set down on a desert island. The problem of keeping alive presses; and for the first few days every thought and every muscle is thrown into the struggle. This Crusoe looks for a spring, digs for edible roots, hunts, fells trees, builds himself a shelter. He observes the plant and animal life about him; and studies closely the soil, the rocks and the coast-line of his island. In this practical reshaping of a world, the manifold of colors, lines, spaces, and sounds of which he originally became aware is broken up into objects—birds, trees, plants, beach, clouds—and a study of their natures and relations is forced upon him. An interest, sharpened by anxiety and need, leads him to attend to like-

nesses and differences, and to the service all these objects may render him in his struggle to maintain life; this means a further reshaping: the birds become game; the trees, timber; and the clouds, a possible water-supply.

With the disappearance of need in its most pressing form it becomes possible for him to react to his environment in two other ways: *hedonically* and *aesthetically*. Pleasure and pain there were before this, but they were too closely bound up with problems of well-being; now pleasure, at least, has become detached with a savor and a value of its own: the man enjoys his hunting or fishing, lingers over his food. He becomes a pleasure-taster and pleasure-seeker; and extracts from his experiences something he had neglected. Things are now valued as they affect him agreeably. Still another response is his. He begins to see a tree, not as so much timber or as the bearer of delicious fruit, but as a complex of lines and colors, with a life and spirit of its own expressed in the texture patterns of its trunk, in the glister and sweep of its fronds. With senses and imagination freed from too insistent a self-reference and from ideas of sustenance, he feels himself into this its life; and if there is something of the creative artist in him he sets himself the task of rendering it in a charcoal drawing on stone. He responds aesthetically; and it is the nature of this response which has proved itself to be one of the most puzzling problems of aesthetics.

THE NATURE OF THE AESTHETIC RESPONSE

If the problem is to be made worthwhile it must be studied in the spirit of empirical analysis, at the risk of an initial and possibly final looseness. The marks that distinguish experiences commonly called aesthetic must be set down, and their relations must be traced.

PRACTICAL DETACHMENT

Much has been made of the fact that in art the strain and the stress of practical life and its problems somehow disappear; that its point of view and activities are in this sense *detached* and *disinterested*. In this reading of experience there is the assumption that conduct is largely a matter of purposes which, in their drive and objective, bear more or less directly on the problem of self-preservation—and this, in turn, is a matter of reading things in terms of relations and relations in terms of practical control; and there is the belief that art is to be set aside as something self-sufficient and isolated. It is, however, worth pointing out that the practical and the artistic cannot be severed as can the pages of a book, and that there is danger of serious misreading if practical detachment be taken as the one and only mark of aesthetic experience.

By way of showing that it is one important mark, let us turn back to our Crusoe. For him aesthetic experience appeared at a point when there was some lessening of the strain of adjusting himself to his environment and subjecting it to a control made necessary by the desire to keep alive. He could now see beauty in the oar he was shaping; in the game that was to be his kill; and in the tree whose fruit he meant to eat. The problem of saving himself had made it necessary for him to read things in terms of the qualities of directest use: the tree in terms of fruit or lumber or shade; and to fashion things whose very meaning was one of use: oars, traps, clothing. With the coming of security and leisure it was possible for him (1) to pass from the usable qualities of a thing as they affected him to the thing itself, (2) to detach the thing from its purposive relations to other things as well as to himself, (3) to respond sympathetically to its self-expressive life.

Suppose a naturalist, interested in the habits of wild ani-

imals and hunting with a camera, sees a flash of color in the jungle and is confronted with a tiger ready to leap. At that moment he can have no interest in the self-expressive purpose of the tiger other than that of thwarting it: the camera must give way to the gun. But even when there is no such crisis his interest is non-aesthetic because scientific in a broad relational sense. The tiger is studied within the context of the forms, processes, and manifestations of organic life. The reading is in terms of the actual—of life as it has been, is, and probably will be; much of this reading is abstract, incapable of being put into imagery. This furnishes by way of contrast another clue to the nature of the aesthetic response.

MOVING WITHIN A WORLD OF SEMBLANCE, OR APPEARANCE

The world of art is neither the actual world nor a copy of it. By the material it works in, sculpture is cut off from the possibility of giving even the complete image of a man; the technique of painting, in drawing and in range and combination of color, is an elaborate structure of illusion, which is never the equivalent of the stuff or the form of experience; and music moves within a world of its own creation. In so far as we enjoy art we respond to this world of appearance and its new, superposed values;—aware, as in tragedy, of actualities, but never, except when we are least aesthetic, applying the same measure to the two worlds.¹ Suppose we

¹ Hissing the villain in a play, applying moral standards to Falstaff or to a French farce, enjoying the extreme lifelikeness of wax figures means stepping outside the world of semblance and of aesthetic appreciation.

All sorts of problems radiate from this idea of a world of appearance which we playfully create and enjoy. Here are a few set down at random: Does lifelikeness play a legitimate part in art? To what extent are we aware of a playful self-deception? Is this new world more real to us or less real than the actual world? How is it related to a world of dreams? Is it possible to step out of it and back again and be the gainer in an aesthetic sense?

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now step within the experience of our Crusoe and become aesthetic appreciators of the world about us. An attitude of practical detachment has allowed us to rescue things from a relatedness to our needs and purposes, and to a system of facts; and to become responsive to a life of their own. We then—to borrow a thought and a phrase from Vernon Lee—pass from things to shapes. Color, light and shade, and sound now appear in their own right; so does form with its organization of lines and planes. A tree is no longer regarded in terms of so much lumber and fruit or of hidden items we know about but cannot see—such as the toughness and grain of its wood or its far-reaching roots—it is not an actual plant in a system of plant life. Rather is it an image carved out of space: a sensuous and formal presence compounded of colors, textures, lines and spacings, depths, and horizontal and vertical reaches; living its own life—resplendent, colorful, vigorous, closely knit—on a plane other than the actual; directly pleasing to the senses and touched with emotional and imaginative suggestiveness.

Unfortunately, words like appearance, semblance, *Schein* have embarrassing connotations; they suggest something that appears in the mirror or shadow-play of art; and they bring with them the whole problem of representational values. If we clear away this we seem to be no better off, for aesthetic experience then seems too much like a shallow enjoyment of color and design; the world of nature aesthetically responded to and the world of art, created and appreciated, seem comparable to a child's game of building triangles and polygons from tiny colored sticks and tinting the enclosed spaces. What a poor change this for the palpable, pulsing, intricate life of practical and scientific realities! Such criticism overlooks a further mark of the aesthetic response: the enriching of this world of semblance.

A WORLD OF SEMBLANCE ENRICHED

When I regard a tree aesthetically I have done something very strange. I have stripped it of its usefulness and agreeableness, and have set it apart as a shape. Three great human interests seem to have vanished in my refusal to have my experience circle about what is of use to me, what affects me agreeably, and what confronts me as an actuality. They reappear, however, in altered form and with a new and startling significance. Purpose reappears as relatedness in part of line to line, color to color, and of parts to an organic whole, in part of the visual image to conditions under which I can attribute beauty to it. Agreeableness is shorn of its reference to me and to my well-being and is infused into the shape as a quality. In this sense aesthetic experience is marked by *selflessness* and *objectified pleasure*. As for the third, the interest in something tangible, something we can knock up against and can observe behaving is satisfied in a new form. The world of artistic shapes is self-sufficient; it forces our senses and our imagination to move within the measure of its imagery. A beautiful object confronts us as truly as any other; it has laws and a life of its own; and it is palpably real.² When I see my face in a mirror I am in the presence of an image which interests me as a reflection, and I expect to find nothing in the image that is not in the face. But when nature is mirrored in aesthetic contemplation or is caught up and reflected in art there are two striking differences. Subjectively, the image is not held to be a duplication or likeness; we move contentedly within the appearance and hold it to be self-sufficient in its direct appeal; objectively, there is a magical quality in the mirroring which gives an additional richness to the image.

² Pirandello has in his plays exploited artistically the problem of the relation between reality and existence. In *Six Characters in Search of an Author* the life of fictional characters is held to be no less real than that of their creators or readers.

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The world we live in is a practically reshaped world, in which things are modified, invented, destroyed; and in which we are constantly pressing beyond images to facts and uses. The world of art is a sensuously and imaginatively reshaped world, in which there is an initial flattening of things to shapes, and then a giving to these shapes something of our own wealth. The acknowledgment of such a transference appears in many aesthetic theories; Lipps speaks of *lending*; Volkelt of *menschlich wertvoller Gehalt*; *empathy*, of which so much is made by Lipps, Groos, and Vernon Lee, is nothing but giving to inert material our motor impulses, memories, moods, and ideas.

There are, of course, other ways of enriching. To the astronomer the moon means more than a luminous disk; the worshipper uses a cross, candles, strings of beads as symbols or as points of departure and support for religious feeling. In both cases sense objects are caught up in a mass of orderly images and far-flung emotions, and in a sense destroyed. In art there is no such ranging. Sense-values are created and maintained in their own right; they are never merely points of departure. Intellectual and imaginative values are given a sensuous form which is felt to have a reality and worthwhileness of its own; and which in turn, like a magnet, gathers to itself other values.

What is the nature of this process of enriching by means of which semblances become humanly significant and thus acquire greater artistic depth?

THE NATURE OF THE PROCESS OF ENRICHING

Nature as it is present in a landscape painting or a sculptured figure has been reshaped sensuously and imaginatively by the artist. In one sense his work falls short of the scene or the body which furnishes the material for his art. What he gives is something other and in a sense something in-

finitely more; and it is the nature of this *more* in the aesthetic response which is our present concern.

The landscape painter, unable to compete with nature in the range and grading of colors, substitutes a scale of his own, develops graded and contrasted effects, re-arranges and stresses; and thus creates an organized color image. Among the many lines which the landscape offers he selects such as serve his purpose; he places accents, relates and unifies; and in this way fashions a pattern of his own of lines and masses.

In addition, he makes these colors and lines the carriers of moods, imaginative constructs, ideas. He means his picture to be humanly significant and relies, therefore, in part, on an enriching process in which the beholder shares. One need only step up close to a picture to see how sketchy the whole thing is; how what is merely suggested must be rounded out into semblances.

The process of enriching involves a double response: *sympathetic* and *empathetic*.

However much an artist reinterprets and re-organizes from necessity and choice, he must respond sympathetically to the tree or flower or cloud he is to paint: feel the conspiracy and unity of its lines and colors, the character of its patterns, the spirit of its life. A like sympathy must we carry to the contemplation of the artist's work. The unity and originality of his design must be grasped, and the working out of his artistic purpose must be felt. This, again, leads to the artist as he expresses himself creatively. But that curious law of *not stepping out of bounds* must not be forgotten. The personal bias, the moods, and the ideas of an artist interest us aesthetically only in so far as he has infused them in his work; for it is only then that they have become detached, and part of a world of semblance, and humanly significant in the largest sense.

There is also an empathetic response. The term empathy

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has been coined as the equivalent of *Einfühlung*, *feeling oneself into*. In a general sense it means a reading of inanimate nature in terms of human life and its attributes. It is a lending and a vivifying. We speak of lines marching or bracing themselves, of a rising mountain, of screaming reds, of a modest violet, of a weeping willow, of a forehead villainously low. These are not mere figures of speech. They testify to a transference whose mechanism is interesting and whose place in aesthetic experience is a not unimportant one.

MOTOR EMPATHY: Our psychophysical response to the world is strikingly and incurably motor. As we explore things our eye-balls change position and shape; our head turns to the tensed play of the muscles of the neck and back; our hands reach out. Our bodies, even at rest, are a mass of tensions and flexions; it requires only the familiar experiment of standing erect and of thinking of something on the ground in front to feel oneself falling. According to Vernon Lee back of the phrase "the rising mountain," that is back of our reading of inanimate objects in motor terms, are actual muscular adjustments—as the eye seeks higher and higher levels—and the funded motor memory of like movements in the past. It is all this that we project in the sense of putting it in the object.

There is, however, this difficulty. Many of our muscular adjustments serve practical purposes. Thus we turn our eyes to put an object within the field of clear vision; we interpret a mountain in terms of the effort of climbing it; an apple means to us an agreeable biting into it, past or future; smoothness of skin, the running our hand along its surfaces. All this practical side of motor activity disappears in the aesthetic response. It is not as part of the actual world of success and failure that we see ourselves, in our tensing and stressing, in the mirror of art.

EMPATHY OF MOOD: When we speak of a weeping

willow, the angry sea, gay colors, sated browns, melancholy blues we are as truly empathetic as when we speak of skipping lines, screaming reds, the push and pull of the parts of a design; but the projection is one of feeling, of mood. We are not confessing that certain lines and colors have a depressing, others an exhilarating effect; we are endowing our world of images and shapes with the wealth of our emotional life—and we respond to it as thus embodied. These terms are not figures of speech—the whole process is too direct for that—too deeply expressive of an original animism. Inanimate nature is instinctively humanized and dramatized.

PSYCHIC EMPATHY: This is empathy in its widest meaning: a projection not only of our motor experiences and our moods but of our whole life as *lived and valued*. It is Lipps's *Lebensbetätigung* and Volkelt's *menschlich wertvoller Gehalt*. Neither the creation nor the enjoyment of art can be understood if this projection is lost sight of. Ordinarily what we call the sense of living is either a keen, vague, objectless sense of vigor, physical and mental, or a sense of effective concern with and mastery of definite purposes; and what we call a sense of human values is either a vague sanctification of life or a struggle to make good our moral, practical, and religious ideals. Aesthetic experience rids us of this double vagueness and of definite practical stress as well. The artist gives himself in his work; he offers a personal interpretation, creates new sensuous, emotional, and imaginative patterns and values. Tragedy is a good example of this interest, not vague and not practically embarrassed, in human life on its psychic side. Only the vigorous and the imaginative can enjoy this form of art. We who respond to what the artist gives read it whether we will or no in psychic terms. A few patches of color and strokes, a few sequences of sounds, a few words is all that we need to set us off on this enriching. We must see to it, however, that we

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are always in harmony with what of psychic value the artist has built into his picture, his poem, his symphony.

The double process, then, of creating and moving within a world of semblance, and of enriching the images and shapes of that world with our psychic wealth yields the meaning of aesthetic experience.

PART THREE

THE ARTS

THE DANCE

Back of the dance in its highly specialized artistic form are the natural rhythms, the broad utilities, and pleasures of life. From this cosmic and cultural background emerges an art, which by the use of rhythm, pose, gesture, and setting creates a world of mobile patterns and imaginative values—a realm of its own, but reminiscent none the less of the life from which it sprang. The old cultural dances of India and Egypt reappear in the work of a Ruth St. Denis or a Sent Ma'hesa, but with a new life and meaning put into their stiff, hieratic forms; the free rhythms and aggressive movements of the Russian folk-dance are subjected to a new discipline and bent to a new purpose in a ballet like *Ingomar* or in the art of a Nijinski or a Mordkin. There is a wide difference between dancing—as work or pastime—and the dance, but there is an indebtedness as well; and both difference and indebtedness must be constantly borne in mind.

RHYTHMS AND RHYTHMIC ORGANIZATION

NATURAL RHYTHMS

One need not return to a naive nature philosophy and think of the universe as a huge breathing animal to discover rhythmic processes. They are everywhere:—in the cycle of the seasons; in the choreography of the heavens; in the advance and recession of tides; in the lapping of water against pilings or the swaying of tree-tops in a storm; in pulse-beat and breathing; in the ebb and flow of vital forces. Then there are the rhythms of psychical reactions: the

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curious fluctuations of the attention, charted by the experimental psychologist, and the equally curious rhythmic expression of intense feeling—the clenching and unclenching of fists, moans, the stamping of feet, the sing-song of lamentations, the throb and drum of shouts.

Natural rhythms differ in quality, complexity, tempo, and pleasingness. The flicker's tap-tap has a quality of its own; so has the less simple whine and whirr of a saw in a planing-mill. The rhythms of a crowded city street move faster than those of a village. The jingle of sleigh-bells is more pleasing than the sliding of a trolley along its rails. Ordinarily we attend to and appreciate only a few of these rhythms; the quality of the more complex and less pleasing escapes us. We do not look for rhythms in crowds, nor for rhythmic patterns in noises. The 1:2 and the 1:2:3 patterns, differently accentuated, of poetry and dancing are but a narrow selection from the many rhythms of speech and bodily movement. At this point an unstable attention and a variously stressing emotional response step in and change the chop-chop of a mechanical iambic line to a finely tempered series of stresses and pauses, and the monotonous tick-tock of a clock into a swinging variety of sounds. These subjective rhythms cannot be set off sharply from the others—it is impossible to cut in two the world man takes and the thing he makes of it.

RHYTHMIC ORGANIZATION

In selecting and reshaping natural rhythms and in throwing the common stuff of experience into varied forms, man shows himself an organizer on a grand scale. The smooth play of interlocking or threading machinery; the confused mass of vehicles swung into a system of traffic regulation; the orderly variety in building and dredging enterprises; landscape gardening; aquatic spectacles and fire-

works; gymnastic and military drills—such are a few samples of this work, which means the rearrangement in time and space patterns of man's body and its physical setting. It is easy to understand why such organization is undertaken. Rhythm (1) makes apprehension easier—witness memory verses and the grouping of items—(2) makes achievement easier—witness the rhythmic dipping of oars or the swing of the scythe—(3) gives a pleasurable tone to experiences—witness our delight in patterned rugs, in flower-beds, in watching troops deploying. Neither the individual nor the group need be conscious of such benefits; they may be sought after and gained in response to activities that are as spontaneous and as incidental as they are helpful. A man may dance for the love of it, improvising gestures and movements that are flung out and then bent back into a scheme of measured self-expression; a group may in a holiday mood stage a spectacle in which mass rhythms of sound and color blend in a constantly changing orderliness. No matter how stereotyped a society may be in its forms or how mechanical in its manners and pastimes, this freedom is never wholly absent. The Renaissance and the Grand Siècle had their elaborate codes of courtly behavior—the bow, the sweep of the hat, the use of the fan, the exchange of compliments; they had their hieratic processions and their stately dances, delicately and minutely phrased. Nothing could be more elaborate and more sacrosanct than the dancing manuals of these periods. But the minuet and the quadrille, dances that are too formal for our taste, were made to yield individual variations of rhythm. Freedom is prized as well as uniformity; and no codification can put an end to it. That is why social amusements can never be standardized; and that is why a hackneyed verse-form may be made to yield new music. In the dance these impulses work themselves out harmoniously: an individual life stirs in an ordered, flowing pattern.

THE DANCE AND SOCIAL WORK

Dancing marks the life of even the most primitive group, and it is consciously or unconsciously practised and encouraged in order to make that life more effective. Muscular efforts are to be correlated; common feelings are to be aroused; a common will is to be fostered; social demands are to be made impressive. Work must be done, and this work—hunting, scouting, tilling, rowing, and fighting—is largely of a direct physical type, which sets a premium on strength and speed. The lack of machinery forces the constant use of capricious human material; this in turn must be made to function smoothly. Nor is the rhythmic bending of muscles to common tasks all that is needed: the absence of an advanced system of intellectual and moral values forces a direct appeal to mass impulses and mass feeling. Social consecration, again, moves along the levels, not of ideas, but of picture-thought and the childlike, sensuous appeal of processional and festival.

Gymnastic dances supply the necessary physical training and with their leaping, bounding, and whirling develop what primitive life insistently calls for—an agile strength. War dances prepare men for fighting and set them to the martial key. The sending of arrows, the brandishing of heavy war-clubs, the hurling of spears, the clinching and retreating, the taking cover must all be done smoothly and must be rightly timed if they are to be effective. Excitement is whipped up by shouting and dancing and the noise of tom-toms and war-rattles or by the crude naturalism and the equally crude symbolism of erotic dances. Religious dances with their mixture of ceremonial, incantation, and magic make social needs impressive. Dancing for rain after a drought or for the removal of a spell supposed to have been cast on the chief of the tribe impresses the individual with the seriousness of social dangers and stresses the

world of malevolent or beneficent spirits on which ordinary life is imagined to rest. Mass dances of the more playful sort serve the purpose of spreading contentment and promoting good fellowship.

It is to be noted that the occasion for these dances (war, the gathering of fruits, an invocation, an initiation, a religious festival, a market-fair) and the staging (a hall, an open space, a tribal circle) are given by the tribe; and that these dances are for the most part group dances, characterized by a bewildering variety of shared movements and massed effects. Even when there is solo dancing, when from the crowd there leaps dancer after dancer to do his bit of gymnastic or mimetic dancing, the social motif is still present, in the spirit of rivalry and in the palpitating life of the encircling multitude of potential participants.

One thing, however, must not be forgotten. Even in advanced societies there is more loose play than is needed for smooth running; and this is more marked in primitive groups. It has been said of a certain tribe of Eskimo that with them four days out of seven are holidays. All this feasting, dancing, and buffoonery are to be explained in part in terms of high spirits, of an inveterate playfulness, and a childlike unconcern with the future; in part in terms of a life organized loosely enough to allow such things some play. To ignore this spontaneous, individual element in early dancing is to falsify the facts in the interest of a theory of utility values which cannot be upheld; to exaggerate it is to overlook the need of a process of *aesthetic indirection*, which changes this socially charged early dancing to the free, highly individualized art of the dance.

THE PROCESS OF AESTHETIC INDIRECTION

As society advances the response to life becomes more indirect and more subtle. Impulses are less headlong and less aggressive in their satisfactions. The sex-impulse, for

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instance, is less brutal, more playful in the matter of love and courtship, and more responsive to all manner of secondary stimuli. Feelings are less unshaded by individual differences and less instinctively social, and are organized into sentiments; motives are more complex. Practical needs as they shift and relax their pressure, at this point or that, allow the release of energy for play. Man turns aside to the contemplative and decorative uses of life; and a detached aesthetic consciousness emerges. This process of aesthetic indirection implies (1) the changing of work into play, (2) the viewing of leisure as a chance for amusement, (3) a new, subtle response to life in terms of the serious playfulness of a creative art impulse. Even at low cultural levels there is not much work that is so grinding and so eagerly pointed at results as not to allow an occasional interest in processes, an occasional enjoyment of muscle tensions, of sweeping movements, of surging or receding emotions. To the man to whom canoeing and hunting are serious business the rhythmic flash and dipping of the paddle and the gliding of the body through grass in stalking game may be a source of pleasure. Other things to be considered are the seasonal character of agricultural work; a bantering rivalry that leads to the playful trying out of muscles; changes in the nature of the needed work, allowing sportive survivals such as our camping or hunting and many of our outdoor games. Again, man becomes more acutely aware of his leisure time as something to be filled with individualized enjoyment. What he seeks is "a good time," which means getting as far away from work as possible and striking out for himself in his search for pleasure. The bulk of our dancing is of this sort; we often enjoy our art as we eat our bonbons. But this individualized enjoying oneself that has shaken itself free from work is only a first step; if art is to emerge, interest must be shifted from self

and its stimulation to an object or projected activity which is the summing up of the artist's power and the rallying point for the sense and the imagination of the onlooker or listener. That means a *double indirection*: a work of art is set over against an actual practical world and over against a hungry and self-conscious self. Ritual dances become art to the dancers only when delight in their formal patterns obscures interest in what the magic of the ritual is to gain.¹ A love experience becomes art for the lover only when it is set over against himself, as a flashing circle of images and feelings which are and are not himself.²

¹ Cf. Miss Harrison, *Art and Ritual*.

² This is the secret of lyric poetry. The practice and the theory of some expressionists seem to run counter to this second detachment. They push what they call *Ichgefühl* to the limit of egomania. Here are samples from Gottfried Benn's *Synthese*;

Ich aber bin der stillsten Sterne;
Ich treibe auch mein eignes Licht
Noch in die eigne Nacht hinaus.

Ich wälze Welt. Ich röchle Raub.

But even in such poetry the projection is felt as projection and the images count as images. Kurt Heynicke's *Mensch* is a good illustration:—

Ich bin über den Wäldern,
Grün und leuchtend,
hoch über allen,
ich, der Mensch.
Ich bin Kreis im All,
Blühend Bewegung,
getragenes Tragen.
Ich bin Sonne unter den Kreisenden,
Ich der Mensch,
ich fühle mich tief,
nahe dem hohen All-Kreisenden,
ich, sein Gedanke.
Mein Haupt ist sternbelaubt,
silbern mein Antlitz,
ich leuchte,
ich,
wie er,
das All;
das All,
wie ich!

THE DANCE AS A WORK OF ART

Each type of the dance has its own technique, and its own peculiar resources, problems, and sets of meanings. The more highly specialized the dancing is—as in the clog dance, the acrobatic dance, and the toe dance—the more difficult it is to set its special significance within a general aesthetic theory of the dance. This is a problem which confronts the aesthetician in every field of art. How much of what is peculiar to a sonnet, a roundelay, or a ballad can be carried over to a theory of poetry? How much of low relief into that of sculpture? How much of a pastel into that of painting? It amounts to a struggle between the desire for unity and a delicate responding to differences. The best thing to do in this predicament is (1) to attempt to mark the aesthetic meaning of the dance—making reservations where they are needed; (2) to characterize the different types of the dance; (3) to break up the total effect of the dance into its component elements—rhythm, pose, gesture, costume and setting—and their varying relations; (4) to recapture and restate in intellectual terms the life and spirit of a dance, and the idea—symbolical or otherwise—of which it is the living expression.

THE AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF THE DANCE

FUSION OF SPACE AND TIME IMPRESSIONS: Imagine an oblong box, tilted up and with the lid taken off, and let it represent the enclosed and bounded space of the stage. For the simpler effects it is lined with black or edged with silver and cloth of gold; for the more complex all the illusionist devices of stage-craft are used. Cutting across this space, from side to side, from front to rear, diagonally and vertically, the dance swings its varying pattern. With a pause in the music, the dancers come to a momentary rest,

the whirl of impressions settles to a clarified picture of blotches of color and an angled criss-cross of bodies, arms, and legs. This decorative ensemble every new onset of music shatters to bits. There is no other art which combines so directly and effectively the visual and the motor appeal. It is not a matter of alternating rest and motion, for the pause with all its decorative poses is felt to be the resolution of a movement and an urge toward new rhythmic developments; and every motion in turn utilizes to the full the sensuous beauty—in mobile form—of color, of light, of bodily lines.

THE VISUALIZING AND IMAGINATIVE ORDERING OF IMPULSES AND EMOTIONS: Responding to the manifold character and tempo of the music and adding a spirit and gesture of its own, the dance moves up and down, back and forth between the slack and the tensional, the impulse to relax and the impulse to fling oneself about, to whirl and leap, yielding and fighting, calm and anger, stinting and lavishing, lust and playful courting, elation and depression, pleasure and pain, joy and sorrow. In ordinary life impulses are felt by us in their direct, outgoing pressure, emotions are more or less formless, and both feed on feelings of self or are worked up into purposes. It is we who have the impulse to jump, higher and higher, to the point of exhaustion; it is we who are angry and are carried along in a gathering flood of anger; it is we who give anger an object and shape it toward a definite scheme of revenge. In art much of this formlessness, purposiveness, and self-relation is lost; impulses and feelings are cut loose from self, set over against us, and projected into a visual and imaginative world, and in this world are reduced from chaos to order or from an organization in terms of practical stresses and purposes to an organization of line, color, sound, rhythm. In the dance, of all the arts, this change is most marked, for there impulses and feelings are presented in their transitional

developments—something that sculpture and painting cannot do—take sensuous form—an impossibility in music—and are shown—as they are not in poetry—in the closest relation to the motor life of the body.

A CONSTANTLY RENEWED INTERCHANGE OF FREEDOM AND ORDER: The traditional ballet of the early operatic stage shows an almost complete schematization of dress, pose, and movement. The dancer is put in tights and a short gauze skirt, is schooled in the difficult technique of toe-dancing, is drilled in the *rond de jambe*, *pirouette*, *cabriole*, *entrechat*, *glissade*,³ and taught to dance in an ensemble in which everything is reduced to rule.⁴ How effectively this destroys the spontaneity and individuality of the body and its movements may be seen by watching a toe-dancer take a few walking steps. It is only a great dancer—a Genée or a Pavlova—that can get fine artistic effects from such a system; it is only a great organizer that can gain from it decorative and pantomimic effects such as are to be found in *Les Sylphides*, in *L'Oiseau de Feu*, and in Rimsky-Korsakov's *Snégourootchka*.

In other freer forms of the dance at least a large part of the aesthetic pleasure may be traced to our being conscious that the dancers are creatively active with their bodies and to our witnessing free individual energy taking rhythmic form

³ Many of these steps and movements occur in folk dances—the *pirouette* in the *Gypsy Flamenco*, the arabesque in the *Tarantella*, the *rond de jambe* in the *Slavonic Obertass*, the battement and *pirouette* in the *Scotch Reel*. Emmanuel, in *La Danse Grecque*, has traced them in the old Greek dances. He has, however, made the mistake of interpreting too much in the spirit of the ballet master of the French Classical School, and hence slighting the freedom that governs their use here as well as in folk dancing.

⁴ The musical comedy stage has escaped the mechanical in dress, but still shows a deadly misunderstanding of art in its stereotyped deploying of masses of girls, its marching and counter-marching, and grouping. Its patterned dances suggest the process of painting kitchen borders through perforated paper. The "perfect stepping" of the London Palace Girls is an example of complete mechanization.

and form being turned back to energy. The tumultuous but ordered choreography of *Schéhérazade* or of Fokine's *Bacchanal* may be cited in proof. The dancing is individualized and in some measure improvised; it does not shun an occasional clash with the music and the settings; it does not lose sight of the fact that the dance is a living thing and not a drill or a set of rules. Nor need this free, living character be lost when revelry and abandon are not the subject of the dance. *Petrouchka* with its marionettes and mechanized movements was never mechanical, as Bolm and Massinine danced it.

In practical affairs we ordinarily put the stress definitely one way or the other, on form or on free life. If we have clipped a hedge, we look with disfavor on new, irregular shoots; if we have built a factory, we are anxious to have it grow and hum with life—let it grow if it will beyond the original scheme. In the arts the emphasis is not so strong, but it is still there. We look in poetry for either freedom and substance or for form; it is only occasionally that we find a perfect blend. In poetry, painting, and sculpture the form that has been gained is appreciated as a permanent achievement; there is no temptation to break it up. Music and the dance show a constantly changing succession, and a balanced stress on sensuous beauty and form. In the dance the form is not permanent: it is ever dissolved and renewed. A gesture or a movement as direct as life itself strikes into and scatters the group of dancers; a note of strength or grace escapes the ensemble; and then all this free variety is led to a new pattern, as individual and as full of latent life as the old one. The life interests as much as the form; and it is the incessant passing from the one to the other that is one of the secrets of the aesthetic appeal of the dance.

THE TYPES OF THE DANCE

In discussing the various types of the dance—the gymnastic, the decorative, the mimetic, the pantomimic, the interpretative, or “classical”—it is not my purpose to go beyond the point at which dancing emerges in the field of art. Originally expressive of simple instinctive needs, (mimicry, vigorous and various physical expression, control, rhythmic order) and serving social purposes, the dance, due to a process of *aesthetic indirection*, shifts the stress from the work to the pleasure which originally furthered the work, and changes this pleasure to a peculiar kind of satisfaction. It offers itself as an artistic content of movements, colors, lines, and projected feelings and ideas; it reflects the purposes and capacities of the dancer; and it is danced to elicit an artistic response from the spectators. It is the dance in this its varied detachment that is of interest to the aesthetician.

THE GYMNASTIC DANCE: The gymnastic dance shows many varieties. It includes violent gyrations and twists of the body, balancing and pirouetting, the volte and the caper, dancing with flexed knees, stamping, whirling, and spinning in Russian peasant fashion.⁵ It is independent of all but the most rudimentary music, but may parallel effectively simple changes in tempo and musical flare-ups. I remember a Russian dancer who rolled across the stage like a ball, to the accompaniment of a ripple of music and a quick unslinging of notes. The gymnastic dance is almost purely motor; what it presents is not varied rhythmic motion or beauty or grace, but strength, agility, skill. We feel the life of the dancer in the dance, and tense our own bodies in answer. But is physical abandon art, and is the doing of

⁵ Lucian in *On Pantomime* (34) alludes to a gymnastic dance, the *Phrygian*—“that riotous, convivial fling which was performed by energetic yokels to the piping of a flute-girl, and which still prevails in country districts.”

stunts anything beyond acrobatics? it might be asked. It is true that the gymnastic dance frequently moves to one or the other of these extremes. If it avoids them, it has a genuine and characteristic aesthetic appeal. Life, abundant and at high pressure, is there, and so is a forming principle, which concerns itself with the matter of control rather than with the ordering of space and time. How lightly he leaps; how deftly he gets every ounce of strength from his body! How freely and surprisingly he does it all!

THE DECORATIVE DANCE: The decorative dance puts beauty in the place of strength, and organization of sound, color, and line in the place of muscular control. Processional and ceremonial dances, pageants, circular dances with shifting and interlocking patterns are of this type. They appeal frankly to the eye and make much of the music. Examples are: the Greek *Chain Dance*, the *Saraband*, the *Minuet*, and the *Quadrille*. Among folk dances the *Maypole Dance* and the *Farandole* are strongly decorative.⁶ Loie Fuller's Serpentine dances are purely decorative in their use of flowing draperies thrown into constantly new forms by undulating movements of the arms and in their changing color reflections.

THE MIMETIC DANCE: Of this, the simplest and the earliest are the animal dances.⁷ To these must be added imitations of jointed dolls, wooden soldiers, leaping flames, the dress and manner of other people, and movements such

⁶ Kinneys, *The Dance*:—"The Farandole is popular in the South of France. Under its name a chain of boys and girls, united by handkerchiefs that they hold, 'serpentine' and zigzags in directions indicated by the caprice of their leader, perhaps traversing the length of the streets of the village. From time to time the leading couple will halt and form their arms into an arch for those following to pass under; or again stop the procession in such a way as to wind up the line into a compact mass."

⁷ Examples are:—kangaroo, frog, and bear dances: sword and spear dances; the *Sailor's Hornpipe*, with its imitations of hoisting sail, rowing, hauling in rope; the Dance of the Wooden Soldiers in the *Chauve Souris*: the *Whistling Boy*, danced by ten year old Ruth Goodwin of the Helen Moeller School.

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as throwing the javelin, playing ball, tracking game, fording a stream, rowing, courting, praying. It is a mistake to interpret such dances and our enjoyment of them simply in terms of a delight in mimicry and appreciation of skill. Copying if well done affords pleasure, but there is often no literal copying in the mimicry dance. There is a rhythmic reinterpretation, a rounding off of gestures, an exaggeration of movement, such as swaying or strutting, an extravagance of costume—all pointed at greater beauty or greater expressiveness. There is a distortion which reflects the dancer's impish joy in falsifying persuasively, and his free, accentuated reading, serious or burlesque, of material ordinarily not stressed or artistically valued. In like fashion, the blank verse of Shakespeare is a rhythmic ordering of words and a distorted transcript of common experiences. In the mimetic dance we are as acutely aware of differences as we are of likenesses. We do not expect to see blood flow in a war dance nor do we look for a literal rendering of lunging and retreating, of sword and buckler play. There are rhythmic repetitions, phrases of movement in answer to musical phrases, and changes in tempo which raise the performance beyond a copy of how men fight. In a *Jointed Doll* dance we enjoy the puppet-like appearance of the dancer and her skilfully mechanized movements; but the greater part of our pleasure is gained from the consciousness that while the dancer is more mechanical than any puppet she is using varied characterization and grotesquerie to make the doll more expressive of free, personal life than any doll could possibly be.

THE PANTOMIMIC DANCE: This is a dramatic elaboration of the mimic dance. In a passage in *Daphnis and Chloe*, Longus has described two such dances: the *Vintage Dance* and the *Dance of the Reed-Pipe*:

Philetas obeyed, and Dryas began the *Vintage-Dance*, in which he represented the plucking of the grapes, the carrying of the

baskets, the treading of the clusters, the filling of the casks, and the drinking of the new made wine. All this Dryas imitated so closely and admirably in the pantomimic dance, that the spectator might fancy the wines, the wine-press, and the casks to be actually before him, and that Dryas was drinking in reality.

Each of the three old men had now severally distinguished himself. Dryas in his delight gave Daphnis and Chloe a kiss, who immediately sprang from their seats, and began to dance a ballet representative of Lamon's fable. Daphnis assumed the character of Pan, and Chloe that of Syrinx. While he endeavored to entice her to his embraces, she smiled in scorn at his attempts. He pursued her, and ran upon his tiptoes in imitation of the cloven feet of the god; while she, making a semblance of exhaustion, at last hid herself in the wood, making it a substitute for reedy lake. Upon losing sight of her, Daphnis seizing the large pipe of Philetas, breathed into it a mournful strain as of one who loves; then a love-sick strain as of one who pleads; lastly a recalling strain, as of one who seeks her whom he has lost.

Philetas himself was astonished, and ran and embraced the youth and kissed him: and with a prayer, that Daphnis might transmit the pipe to as worthy a successor, bestowed it upon as him as a gift. The youth suspended his own pipe as an offering to Pan, kissed Chloe with as much ardour as if she had really been lost and found again, and led his flocks home by the sound of his new instrument.

Here are all the marks of the pantomimic dance. In the *Vintage Dance*, which shows clearly the relationship to the mimetic dance, there is a rhythmic imitation of a series of actions dominated by one purpose, and dramatic because of that. In the *Dance of the Reed-Pipe* there is that and much besides. The fleeing nymph and the pursuing god furnish an action full of contrasts, and dramatically and decoratively interesting. There is, too, in dance and music alike, the portrayal of emotional changes. Then there is a story taken from a legend. Embedded in the legend is a certain amount of symbolism—

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compacting with wax unequal reeds in order to show how the course of their love had not run smooth—

to this must be added such symbolism as the technical limitations of pantomime demand. The pantomimic dance is as a mute drama in miniature, impoverished by the absence of the spoken word, enriched by the presence of music and the lavish and more detached use of decorative effects. In Lucian's list of myths utilized in dances those of a dramatic character predominate: the battle of the Titans; the theft of fire by Prometheus; the destruction of the Python; the birth of Pan; the rape of Helen. The Marion Morgan Dancers have built a series of dances around the story of Helen. The *Thamar* and the *Schéhérazade* of the Russian Ballet are of the very essence of the drama.

If not mechanized or flattened emotionally or strained to the point of grimace, the pantomimic dance is capable of a varied and forceful appeal. Lucian is right when he speaks of its "subtle harmonious versatility" and of its effects on the beholder—"training his eyes to lovely sights, filling his ears with noble sounds, revealing a beauty in which body and soul alike have their share." It must, however, be added that the pantomimic dance often aims at the characteristic rather than the beautiful. An example is Isadora Duncan's interpretation of Tchaikowsky's *Marche Slave*.

THE CLASSICAL, OR AESTHETIC DANCE: Within the last twenty years, at first under the leadership of Isadora Duncan, a new type of dance has become prevalent. It is variously named: classical, because it is Greek in dress and patterned in part after ancient vase-paintings; aesthetic, because it is art in a pure and direct form; interpretative, because it seeks to render the spirit of musical compositions like *The Blue Danube*, Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*, Chopin's *Funeral March*, Gluck's *Iphigenia in Aulis*, the Symphonies of Beethoven.

It has taken on many forms and has become weighted with many aesthetic and educational theories. In the Dalcroze Institute it becomes eurythmics, a sort of musical hygiene aimed at the right tuning of mind and body; in the Elizabeth Duncan School at Darmstadt it is a training in plastic harmony, supposed to be ennobling; in the Free School Community at Wickersdorf it is an attempted recovery of spontaneous social self-expression. With Mensendieck it becomes gymnastic hygiene; with Ruth St. Denis it turns into the costume dance and the exotic drama. The Morgan Dancers put the stress on pantomime, and the Chalif School, on schematized movement. It retains much of its early pure form in the work of the Duncan Dancers and in the Helen Moeller School.

The dancer is clad in a chiton and short diaphanous draperies that leave the limbs bare. Aesthetically, such a costume means, first of all, a frank use of the sensuous beauty of the body. The effect is not sensual or gross, because the bust is felt in relation to the shoulder and arm; the thigh in relation to the torso and the leg; and the whole body, trained away from the too soft and the too muscular, is felt in relation to a rhythmic beauty, of which it seems the living expression. It means, next, the recovery of freedom and naturalness of movement. It means, last of all, a costume which shares in the natural expressiveness of the body, and adds a fluttering decorative life of its own, and a color or two, with the effect of tinting.

The freedom is carried over into the movements of the dancer. In the rendering of dance music, the march becomes less rigid; the minuet softer and less schematized; the gavotte, the mazurka, and the waltz are given a freer life. The motor appeal of the uniform beat of the music is slighted in favor of the motor appeal that lies in a changing rapidity of motion, in an alternation of violent and gentle gestures, in the fluctuating lines of draperies.

THE AESTHETIC ELEMENTS OF THE DANCE

The aesthetic elements of the dance are four: *rhythm, pose, gesture, costume and setting.*

RHYTHM: Rhythm relates the dance to the motor and the formal side of music. It is a matter of accents and pauses, of a changing tempo of tensed and slackened muscles, of the transition from a slow to a fast, from a calm to a startled or frenzied movement. This physical energy, caught in all its intensity and variety, and enjoyed by every motor impulse of our being, is reduced to ever changing formal patterns. There is, fused with this motor response, an emotional response in terms of mood: rhythms are gay, sad, solemn, dreamy, restless, calm. For the rendering of such emotional values the dance must rely in part on music and in part on the cooperation of pose and gesture.

POSE: Pose relates the dance to the expressional and decorative side of sculpture. There is a momentary resolution of the musical, and the attention is shifted from the rhythm to the body as a visual object, interpreted either as an achievement in balance and negation of gravity or as a purely decorative ensemble or as a mould of feeling. Of the first, toe dancing and gymnastic dances offer many examples—such as the balancing on the toes of one foot with the other leg at a right angle or the throwing of the body backward with a violent upthrust of one knee, as shown on page 215 of Genthe's *Book of the Dance*. Of the second, illustrations are to be found in Genthe on pages 43, 61, 149, 165, 167. Of the third, the drooping, mournful poses of the Duncan Dancers in Chopin's *Funeral March*, are an example. These three phases are paralleled in sculpture by *The Flying Mercury*, *The Maiden Tying Her Sandal*, and *The Niobe Group*.

GESTURE: Gesture relates the dance to the decorative

and expressional side of sculpture, painting, and poetry. It differs from pose by a more definite pointing, and by an emphasis on arm and head movements. It is easy to show by rough schematizations how different positions of arms and hands give a different decorative tone to the whole body. Besides, gestures mean something, emotionally and dramatically. Arms are stretched out with upturned palms in supplication; flexed with vertical palms in a warding off movement; bent about the head in grief; flung out laterally in joyful abandon. Two dangers must be avoided. Definite as gestures are, in their purpose and pantomimic value, they are not definite enough to be turned into routine movements. The gesture of despair is spontaneous and differs from person to person. Gesture must not clash with pose; the expressiveness of the arm must have its reason in the carriage of the body.

SETTING AND COSTUME: Setting and Costume relate the dance to the decorative and expressional side of architecture and painting.

There must be chosen for the dancers a space neither too large nor too small, harmonizing with the spirit of the dance, allowing complete freedom of movement, toned so as not to distract, yielding intensifying aid. It is evident that the old style stage settings with their false realism, their rigidity, their clutter of stage properties, their artificial isolation of the figure by means of a spotlight, and their pretentious and distracting settings, are unsatisfactory. The dance has benefited greatly by new methods and ideals of stagecraft. Two paths of development may be followed. One leads to the use of draperies and changing lights, whose varying folds, colors, and luminosities give a living setting to the life of the dance. The other either seeks highly specialized settings for highly specialized dances—cubist angles for a Burmese dance, arabesques for a rococo dance, grotesque,

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teetering lines for a *danse macabre*, splashes of red and black for a dance of passion—or aims at monumental effects and a bold massing of color. If the danger of too static and too obtrusive a stage picture is avoided, striking effects may be gained in this second way. Examples are the elaborate pantomimic dances of the Russian Ballet, and a choreographic composition by Fokine, in which dancers weave their lateral and diagonal patterns on huge, terraced stairs.

The costume presents similar aesthetic problems. It ought to be decorative, in the sense of revealing and enhancing the beauty and grace of the body. Delicately tinted draperies do that, for they respond readily to the motion of the body and offer an infinitely moulded, fluttering life of their own. It ought to be expressive, directly or symbolically, of the nature of the dance. In elaborate dramatic dances the Bakst costumes count for much. The grotesquerie of *Till Eulenspiegel* is heightened by the use of grotesque costumes. But I have seen a girl of ten without the help of a special costume render with great expressiveness the mechanized life of Poldini's *Waltzing Doll*.

The decorative and the expressive in costume may clash. The costumes of Adolf Bolm in *Prince Igor* and of the Lady in *Papillons* are aimed at the characteristic at the expense of decorative beauty; the *Narcissus* costumes are purely decorative. The costume of the Eunuch in *Schéhérazade* shows a balance—it is grotesque in its extravagant lines, decorative in its red, yellow, and orange, and its gold zig-zags and sapphire spots. The emphasis of necessity varies with the character of the dance. Exotic dances invite exotic costumes; historical dances set truth above beauty; the soul of Pierrot lives and dances in his black and white.

The costume, like the setting, ought to reflect the meaning of the dance. Pleasing or expressive as its lines and colors are, they are there only by right of their service; and they

serve by adding to the visual splendor and by intensifying the emotional and dramatic life of the dance.

THE VISUAL, RHYTHMIC, EMOTIONAL, AND DRAMATIC ORGANIZATION OF ELEMENTS

Unless all the elements—*rhythm, pose, gesture, costume* and *setting*—are unified and interrelated, the dance fails of its meaning as a work of art. There must, first of all, be visual organization. Gesture must be related to pose; there must be harmonies of color and line and of grouping; and a converging visual splendor. But that is only part of the task, for the meaning of the dance lies in time as well as in space, and so there must be rhythmic organization. Imagine a series of poses, revealed by flash-light stabs at the darkness. Each pose would strike us separately with a sort of visual self-sufficiency. Not so in the dance! The visual splendor changes from moment to moment, pose melts into pose, lines flutter and settle and flutter. This is not a mere scene-shifting. Every pose, every line, is felt to be mobile and transitional. The dancer carries the principle of continuity in his body; with him, therefore, rests the task of modulating the changing life of the dance and throwing it into rhythmic patterns. But there is more work to be done. Rhythms, poses, and gestures are the carriers of emotions and moods; through their aid dances may express gaiety, sadness, exultation, passion, absorption, grief, melancholy, lightheartedness. One of the problems of the dance is to achieve a single emotional color-tone or the complex unity of an emotional color-poem. There remains the need of dramatic organization. The dramatic theme, or idea, of the dance must not be confused with the subject or story. The subject may be Salome before Herod or the drowning of Narcissus or a tragic love-tangle. Around such subjects the dance, enlisting the services of music, weaves a system

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of dramatic values—of contrasted passions, of startling gestures and sharply accentuated movements, of tumult and repose, of visualized emotion. In the bending of its manifold expressiveness to this unity of theme lies the most difficult task and the greatest opportunity of the dance.

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture, of all the major arts, keeps closest to practical life. Whatever else it may be, it is first of all the art of building; and as such it must submit to an alien will, which chooses the material, sets the cost, fixes a constructive program and carries it out through the genius and craftsmanship of the architect. Because of this it has been set by Kant as a dependent art over against the free arts, in which the artist is allowed to express himself unhampered by practical dictation. Two facts wreck such a theory. Any and every art may be dependent without losing its artistic value. Of this, monumental sculpture, religious dances, and commemorative poetry are examples. Again, in architecture, where the practical control is strongest, this very control serves as a challenge and an opportunity to the architect to be an artist as well as a builder, and to form a variously accented and patterned beauty with the material he has been set to work in and within the specifications of type and cost which are not his.

The close relation, however, makes it difficult for us, engrossed as we are in the technique of living, to respond to a building aesthetically instead of seeing it as part of the business or setting of social life. If we succeed in avoiding this, there is still a difficulty. The will to art in architecture is complex; it does not allow an easy survey and conquest, but demands for its appreciation a disciplined eye and the power to grasp unity of design in intricate masses of heavy, inert material.

What is the aesthetic soul of architecture, and how is

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this soul expressed in the living body of architectural effects?

THE AESTHETIC MEANING OF ARCHITECTURE

A building is a block carved from cubical space. It lacks the simultaneity of impressions which is possible in a painting, and the easy roundness and compactness of a sculptured figure. The spirit of isolation to be found in these arts is lacking in architecture: the block is shaped in relation to the surrounding space and its objects. The site and the setting offer artistic as well as practical problems and opportunities. There are good reasons for the position of a medieval robber castle: it was difficult of access and dominated the road below; when studied as a work of art part of its meaning is to be found in the countryside it gripped and ruled.¹

The more or less massive shell of this hollow block contains either smaller blocks, each separated from the other by ceilings, floors, and interior walls or a large interior broken up into related and communicating spaces. No reading of architecture is complete which neglects interiors, for it is in their fashioning and elaboration that much of the genius of the architecture is revealed. In the Pantheon, a circular temple, there is one vast interior losing itself at its periphery in the depressions of a panelled dome and sweeping past Corinthian columns into the recesses of seven niches. In Gothic cathedrals spatial continuity is combined with bewilderingly complex dividing and stressing. The nave in its reach from portal to choir is flanked by single or double aisles and galleries marked off by pillars and arches and is cut across by transepts; semi-circular chapels break up and individualize the sides; and groined or ribbed vaulting, the

¹ Architectural responsiveness to environment may be studied in the California hillside bungalow; and in city planning, which is coming to be looked upon more and more as a problem in art.

roof. This modulated unity of the interiors of churches, halls, and theatres cannot be gained in office buildings and conventional houses. The modern office building is committed to the "boxes within a box" scheme; the parcelled offices and the mechanical connection of floors by the rectangular block of the elevator shaft or uniformly regular stairs make an artistic interior in the fullest sense impossible. Architects in planning houses are abandoning this scheme. They are doing away with doors, making rooms responsive to each other, and treating halls and stairways in a new manner. In the bungalow superimposed stories are eliminated because of their vertical estrangement, and the rooms are made to share in a common horizontal life. The use of an inner court, or *patio* offers a combination of seclusion—an exterior serving as an interior—and a freely circulating domestic life.

Looked at from the outside, a building is seen as a mass of marble or brick or stone and mortar whose artistic effects are tri-dimensional and manifold, and whose full meaning as a work of art can be grasped only by series of eye-movements and measurements of spaces, planes, and angles in their relations, and of diverse visual excursions and motor responses. This is true of the simple, stacked triangles of the Pyramids as well as of the domed, turreted, and arched exterior of St. Mark's or of a Gothic cathedral with contours that play in and out, filigreed surfaces, flying arches, buttresses, spires, pinnacles, and gables. We never see the exterior all at once, nor do we see it flat. When we are limited to one side of it we see that side as composed of projections and depressions. The limiting lines are felt as edges, windows and doors as openings, and window-facings as planes slanting into the frame. Cornices and pillars are not seen as horizontal and vertical lines; porticoes and doorways thrust out at us or draw us in after them. Surfaces are broken up by mouldings and the plastic help of sculp-

tured figures. The third dimension is actually there; it is not, as in painting, an illusion created by means of the art of perspective. The eye is forced to adjust itself to varying depths. There is a direct and empathetic response to weight and pressure; there are muscle strains and tensional adjustments as the eye follows the upsweep of the Campanile at Pisa or the Eiffel Tower and the low expansive spread of the Parliament Houses at London or of Hampton Court.

So far the aesthetic meaning of architecture has revealed itself as a single and varied life, responsive to its type and setting, expressed through lines, masses, and space-forms, richly and harmoniously planned and elaborated, giving itself quietly and successively to an exploring observer—a life of many accents and one spirit.

This life, however, is incompletely understood if it is not read imaginatively in terms of the creative mood of the builder as that mood becomes visual and gains a meaning far beyond the visual—a meaning which discloses itself only to the imaginative observer. Architecture lacks something of the easy sensuous appeal of painting and sculpture; it demands for its creation and understanding imagination of a high order. The architect uses material—stone or brick—which has very little original sensuous and imaginative value and which is not readily endowed with a significant life; he faces the task of an elaborate organization of space-forms; and he must make what he creates larger, somehow, than the practical need it is meant to serve. Not only must the complex forms of architecture be grasped in their interrelations, as are the cuts in a text-book of solid geometry, but the artist's enriched reading of human life must be shared, and the spirit and life of his work, caught. A Gothic cathedral is at first glance a bewildering mass of intersecting planes, supports, enclosed spaces, and decorative detail—all of which must be felt as a manifold orderli-

ness—but it is also a place of worship, in which must be sensed the mysteries of religion and must be heard the resonant voice of the medieval Church; and it also expresses the spirit of its builders, and through them that of race and period, with special ideals of art and modes of expression—a spirit to be recaptured.

If the artist is a reshaper of images and feelings and if his work is one phase of the imaginative life of mankind, an interpretative reading is needed. But there are dangers to be avoided. A cultural reading may easily degenerate, as it sometimes does in Ruskin, Taine, Cram, and Faure, into brilliant rhetoric or a social rhapsody. It is difficult to withstand this temptation to looseness in arts which like poetry, music, and painting depend in part for their effects on irradiations of feeling and marginal associations. In arts in which craftsmanship is palpably *there*, as in ornamental metal-work, basketry, rug-craft, intaglio-work, and in sculpture and architecture, there is a natural corrective to such fantastic interpretation. The classical and the rococo are interesting as moods and phases of the creative spirit of mankind, but little can be made of them unless their reading is checked up in terms of actual forms. Again, while it is necessary to see the artist in his work, little is gained by taking what he has set aside of himself and made objective and self-sufficient, and putting it back into the personal chaos that was its source. It is better to work down to the aesthetic elements of a building as they appear in combined effects.

THE ELEMENTS OF ARCHITECTURAL EFFECT

LIGHT AND SHADE, COLOR, TEXTURE

The architect has incomplete control of light and shade. The site of a building, constructional needs, the diurnal

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and seasonal shifting of the position of the sun make mastery impossible. Still, there are many chances of catching lights and fixing shadows.

In the interiors of churches this is a matter of (a) openings to admit light, (b) pillars, arches, and recesses, (c) cornices, projections, and grooving, (d) light and dark stone-patterning in floors and walls. In the Pantheon there is only one source of light, a huge opening in the roof; in the Church of St. Godehardi in Hildesheim the light slants in from the side with mottled effects on floor and pews; in the Liebfrauenkirche in Trier and in Notre Dame it pours, softened through tinted glass, down the nave, casting shadows on pillars and slipping past them into aisles. Where there is much structural complexity and breaking of surfaces by means of ornamental carving and fluting, light and shade effects show great variety. Light and dark stone-patterning may be seen in St. Paul Before the Walls.

In the exteriors of Gothic buildings there is a complex system of accents: angled walls, turreted and differently pitched roofs, flying buttresses, arcades and clear-stories, deeply set portals, traceried windows, and filigreed stonework allow a sharp and varied contrast between bright lights and dark, quieting shadows. In simple and massive rectangular buildings like the Palazzo Strozzi, the Palazzo Riccardi, and the Boston Public Library, almost the only accents are those of cornices and mouldings. Mouldings have another, a decorative use. They have also been called devices "whereby, with the help of the light and shade they produce, definition is given to the salient lines of a building"; and they have been shown to be most delicate and least deep and massive where brilliant sunlight and a clear atmosphere make it possible to gain "strong shadows from slight projections."

Color, in architecture, plays its part in the choice of material, in joining, in setting, and mosaics, in the tinting

of surfaces, and in mural decoration. Brick, blackish basalt, the granular mixtures of granite and porphyry, green limestone, and Pentelic marble offer strikingly different color values. Elaborate and variegated inlays of wood and stone in exterior walls seem to us to interfere with the dynamic flowing and stretching of the lines of a building; it is, however, a Moorish liking. In domestic architecture greater latitude is common. Effective variety is gained by combinations of weathered shingling or painted boards with cement or stone substructures. As for the decorative use of color, it is to be found everywhere in a minor rôle: in the gilded and tinted triglyphs and metopes of the Parthenon, the stained glass and the painted timber roofs of the English Gothic, the mural paintings of basilicas and of the twelfth century cathedrals at Hildesheim and Braunschweig; and in the frescoes, colored porcelain tiles, roof framing, and gilt metal work of Indian, Chinese,² and Japanese architecture.³

Texture as an element in architectural effect is too much neglected in aesthetics. Stones may be roughened by chipping or left with a central projection; rubble may be used; laths in a house may run vertically or horizontally; bricks may be glazed or left rough, and they may be joined by grooved or ridged lines of cement. Porous limestone differs in *feel* from granite; a shingled roof has none of the smooth unbending hardness of a slate roof. Such differences are as marked as are those between a Senna and

² Banister Fletcher, p. 812.

³ Banister Fletcher, p. 826, "Colour decoration, introduced from China in the sixth century, is very generally applied to the interior and exterior of Japanese temples. Beams, brackets, carvings, and flat spaces are picked out in gilding and bright colours, such as blue, green, purple, madder, and vermillion. Wall paintings are generally on a gold ground and represent animals, birds, and flowers. Supporting pillars are usually black, red, and gold.—All the accessories of architectural design, lacquer-work, enamels, faience, bronzes, and ivories vie with one another in minuteness of accuracy, softness of colour, and profusion of detail."

Kazak rug or between tweed and broadcloth. Least interesting in point of texture is a smooth stucco surface; it is as featureless as a piece of plain oilcloth and must be redeemed by weathering. Filigree work suggests lace. The term texture need not be limited to the compactness or looseness, the smoothness or roughness of surfaces; it may be applied to the patterned weave and gathering of details in the interior of a mosque or a cathedral.

VASTNESS

Vastness strikes the note of the sublime in architecture. Peculiar effects are gained by great size and height in buildings. Standing within its space, we respond to a vast interior in terms of a kind of muscular space-experimentation. The initial stages of stretching and reaching are combined, in the absence of objects within easy reach, with a quickened sense of extension. If the interior is in semi-darkness, the sense of vastness is more intense; in like manner a lifting fog increases and makes indefinite distances at sea. When a building is looked at from without, the sense of great horizontal and vertical extension is gained, not from eye-measurements and definite estimates, but from movements of the muscles of the eye and neck, and suggested walking or climbing. This may be proved by a simple experiment. Standing at a distance and looking up at a tower or wall, it is possible to get a clear linear image, which on the basis of knowledge is interpreted as great size or height. But to get such an impression directly we must take our position close by and look along the wall or up at the Eiffel Tower or the façade of a cathedral; there is then a sense of on and on, and up and up with no chance of linear limits or easy surveying and measuring of spaces.

MASS AND BALANCE

The material in which the architect works is heavy, and he combines blocks of stone to a structure whose weight and downward thrust are tremendous. Part of the kinetic appreciation of architecture is the response to this exploitation of his of the force of gravity. The Pyramids, simple and massive, offer little else, the effect of an equally colossal pyramid of cardboard would be quite different. Ideas of solidity and durability enter into the creation and enjoyment of the masonry of heavy walls, of heavy beams or metal work, but there is present also this rudimentary delight in the affirmation of great weight.

There is an analogous pleasure in sensing the pressure of one's body—in feeling oneself firmly set. The analogy may be carried further. There is pleasure in stretching upward, in standing on tiptoe—in a denial, as it were, of the force of gravity. In architecture the impression of lightness is given by tapering, as in spires and gables; by the use of slender columns or long, narrow openings; and by strongly accented verticals.

Pressure and upward thrust are in architecture, structurally and artistically, a contest between burden and support. This is one phase of balance. A heavy structure held up by slight pillars suggests strain and top-heaviness as well as squatness; massive pillars under a flimsy superstructure seem to exert more force than is needed. The use of spiral, or corkscrew pillars as supports seems a violation of balance: they suggest buckling and collapse under an excessive burden.

Lateral balance implies success in dealing with the inward and outward thrust of structures carried to great heights. Stability must be given; there is to be no collapse by caving in or bulging. The main lines must be straight up and

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down or with uniform rounding or slanting, as in a spire or a dome. A leaning tower is displeasing; it suggests toppling. There must be balance of subsidiary lines. Buttresses slant in and up to brace the walls; in the pointed arch a lateral thrust is met by a thrust from the right; in a spire there is a meeting and stacking of many diagonals; in the rounded arch, as it appears between pillars or in the vaulting of a dome, and in the arch span of a bridge there is an equilibrium of forces which is pleasing quite apart from its structural use of stability.

Balance is here used in a kinetic sense. It may also be used in the sense of bilateral symmetry. In the latter sense an unbalanced arrangement is an unsymmetrical arrangement. The two uses differ widely. In a stick of the same circumference throughout its length and with weight evenly distributed, the point of balance—in the middle—will also give symmetry of line. Bore a small hole in one end and insert some lead, and the balancing of the stick on a forefinger will result in asymmetry of line. In architecture symmetry has a place apart from any question of weight and balance.

Balance itself is not always a matter of actual weight and stability—it is not merely a structural concept. The Leaning Tower at Pisa stands, but it seems to fall; and in this *seeming* is to be found a large part of the secret of our response not only to architecture but to all art. It is a question of empathy. We throw ourselves into the leaning of the tower, follow it down, muscularly and imaginatively, and feel it falling.

PATTERNED COMBINATION

The simplest form of patterned combination is a row composed of a unit repeated over and over, with the units separated by the same unarresting interval. A row of

windows in an office building is an example, so is a colonnade. Such rows have the practical purpose of serving as openings or supports, and the aesthetic purpose of breaking up walls into smaller ordered spaces. Unless windows and columns offer a pleasing architectural form or arrest the eye by some bit of decorative elaboration, this simple repetition seems uninteresting. Sunken windows, projecting stone facings, columns whether used in their full roundness in a colonnade or in relief as decorative items in a façade, complicate and enliven the effect by adding to the flat horizontal rhythm along the surface a waving rhythm of varying depths. When the façade itself is rounded or waving, variety results from optical illusions.

Somewhat more complex is the simple alternating row in which there is repetition of ornamented intervals, as in the Lian Cathedral. The ornamentation may be like or unlike; in the frieze of the Parthenon triglyphs alternate with metopes, and the latter are individualized by means of varying sculptural compositions.

Instead of the simple 1,2-1,2 alternation there may be a 1,2,3-1,2,3 series or in fact the repetition of any complex pattern. No art equals architecture in the gaining by simple means of manifold effects, striking and intricate, in the integration of forms. In rows of windows one above the other where there are plain intervals there is no integration beyond that of the *feel* of the whole wall surface. With the introduction of panelled columns of greater length than the window frames and of vertical patterning, the harsh separateness of the different stories disappears. Of this the arcades of the Doge's Palace offer an illustration. The columns in the lower row are bound together by the swinging rhythm of the arches; the upper, more slender columns end in arches whose points in turn run into the rolling rhythm of a series of pierced circles—the parts are thus made responsive, and the patterning becomes fluent and variable.

Other complicated patterns may be found in serrated roof lines and in the decorative detail along cornices.

SYMMETRY

By a symmetrical arrangement of parts is meant bilateral inverted repetition swinging on a pivot: as abcIcba. An approximation to this is the human body with its branching from an axis. In architecture symmetry applies to (a) the working out of an architectural scheme and to (b) the decorative ordering of spaces and lines.

ARCHITECTURAL SCHEME: The temple at Edfu, the front of Rheims Cathedral, Notre Dame, St. Mark, and the Town Hall at Antwerp offer examples of almost perfect lateral correspondence. But there are deviations from such a scheme. In many French Romanesque churches—S. Giles, for instance—there is a central symmetrical arrangement flanked by towers of dissimilar height and structure. The Chateau de Chambord seen from the north shows a startling symmetry carried up and over into a many-turreted sky-line, but the wings are of different lengths. Such deflections from absolute symmetry can sometimes be traced back to practical needs or to growth by accretion, as in the Palais de Fontainebleau, but a distrust of the mechanical effect of complete inverse repetition must also be counted in.

DECORATIVE ORDERING OF SPACES AND LINES: Symmetry as it applies to the ordering of parts and to decorative detail may be seen in a threefold arrangement of portals, as in Notre Dame and Rheims Cathedral, in converging mouldings, in stone tracery work in windows, in altars and stone screens, in Buddhist gateways and in the Emperor's Palace at Pekin. In the Doorway of C. S. Pablo at Valladolid an exuberant and florid mass of carving is thrown into a rich and measured correspondence of lines.⁴

⁴ Banister Fletcher, pp. 438, 539, 813.

PROPORTIONALITY

Proportionality refers to (a) the relation between the length, height, and depth of a building, and to (b) ratios worked out and repeated in the various parts.

(a) Make a drawing of the Parthenon with proportions radically altered, push the sides in and lengthen the vertical lines, or make of it a squat, expansive building: in either case there will be distinct loss of beauty. This simple experiment proves that there are certain relations between length, height, and depth which are more pleasing than others. One of the most widely used is an increase by half. It would, however, be a mistake to carry the rationalizing of preferences to the point it was carried to by Fechner in his experiments with rectangles. One of Fechner's least acceptable rectangles, a very long and narrow one, is used with pleasing effect in the Campanile. The truth of the matter is that the nature of a building, whether it is to serve as a tower or a lighthouse, as a bungalow or a temple, and the exigencies of the site, as in the Flatiron Building, are unconsciously taken into account in our reading of proportions.

(b) Ratios are to be found in the mutual relation of the parts of a building. The façade presents a wall to be individualized in many ways: by patterned rows, decorative detail, contrasted accents of texture, depth, and color. If the impression is not to be confused, some sort of horizontal and vertical organization must be had. The openings between columns must bear a fixed relation to the columns themselves; the height of the column, to the breadth; and the several vertical partitions, of cornice, entablature, and support, to each other. At first thought, simple ratios such as 1:1, 1:2, or 1:3 might seem best to serve the part of binding the spaces of a façade to a common life. But try the experiment of combining toy blocks of different colors to a

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façade illustrative of such simple ratios, and you will find a shallow interest in easy patterning soon followed by a slackening appeal: the effect is as monotonous almost as that of verses with the caesura always in the middle or that of music with an unvarying, undisguised 1,2 or 1,2,3 beat. At the other extreme, ratios which can be expressed only by high numbers, such as 18:21 or 37:39 do not yield a felt relation of lines and spaces.

Measurements made on ancient temples by Penrose, Cockerill, and Stuart and summaries and comparisons offered by Hittorf and Raymond prove that Greek architects consciously sought a mathematical scheme. In the Temple of Aegina the width of the raking cornice, the corona, the abacus, and the ovolo is the same; and the tabulated measurements of the parts of some twenty Greek temples, given by Raymond on p. 221 of his *Proportion of Harmony and Color*, reveal the recurrent use of ratios of approximately 1:1, 1:2, 1:3, and 2:3. It must, however, be pointed out that (1) the divergence from perfect correspondence cannot be explained by dwelling on the difference between measured relations and perceived relations, which reflect illusions. The Greek artist knew the value of slight irregularity even in the visual image: he carried the roundness of the middle portion of pillars a little beyond the point at which the lines appear straight to the eye; and (2) the simple ratios apply to capitals and entablatures, where it is possible to vary visually the lines of division, and where when a breadth of space recurs it recurs at wide intervals. Greek architectural proportions in the large run to the less simple ratios of 4:7, 5:7, 5:8, 2:5, 3:8, 9:10. The range of pleasing proportions was held to be a wide one, and too marked a regularity and mathematical transparency was avoided. Architect and sculptor were interested in developing a canon of the proportions of the human body. Vitruvius, whose work subtends lost

Greek speculations, gives what he considers normal human proportions.⁵ Not only is there more than one unit of measurement used—head, forearm, and foot—but the relationships show great variety. There were many such canons, for the range in the human body of the normal and the pleasing is very wide; and the architect and the sculptor readily carried over into their arts something of this breadth.

HARMONY

Harmony in architecture is gained when all the diverse parts and items of a building—masses, lines, spaces, angles, textures, colors, and sculptural ornaments—agree and conspire to give (1) the impression of a single and successful creative will, (2) a single pleasing visual image, (3) unity of spirit and emotional tone. If the architect falters in making arbitrary changes or fails to achieve perfect control over his material and his problems or if many successive artists work in an ill-coordinated way at some huge structure, like St. Peter's in Rome, lack of harmony of the first kind results. Visual harmony is a difficult matter. It is violated when there are: disorderly mixing of rectangular and rounded pillars, a shingled roof on a brick building, a sudden unmotivated bending of lines or sharpening of angles, flimsy looking supports to a frowning and heavy superstructure. Patterning and proportionality lead the eye and the attention into rhythmic paths; a sudden jolting from that path is felt to be disagreeable. It is not a question of always expecting and looking for the same. There must be variety as well as unity. Rather it is a matter of the like or the not too different. Curves and angles must be varied, but within the range of a dominant scheme, such as that of circle segments in St. Sophia, of slender, piercing

⁵ Vitruvius, *De Architecture*, Bk. III, chap. 1.

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triangles in the Cathedral at Cologne, of blunt triangularity in the Cathedral at Orvieto enlivened by sharp thrusts into space. Visual harmony must be interpreted more liberally in architecture than in painting, for a building gives itself in sets of images and must in its organization conform in part to practical demands. Harmony of spirit and emotional tone, the third type, refers to a conglomerate response made up of visual impressions, associations, and suggested emotions. There must be nothing in the interior of a church inconsistent with devotional feeling; and gloom, contrition, and hope must find something of themselves in its darkened spaces, stone floors, high vaulting, and the blues and reds of its large windows.

ORNAMENTATION

The most extraneous forms of ornamentation are sculptures in the round, as in the flat roof triangle of the Parthenon; mural paintings, as those of Polygnotus; fountains, trellises, and shrubbery in enclosed spaces. In all such cases there is a nice adaptation on the part of independent arts, whose contribution to a general decorative scheme is easily set apart. Quite different is the situation when a pillar is sculptured as a Caryatid or an Atlas, a water-spout as a gargoyle, and when, as in the Palazzo Borghese, an elaborate fountain is built into the wall. These things have no structural value—an unadorned pillar or spout would serve as well—they are illustrations, however, of a process of *indirection* discoverable in all the arts, by means of which the useful is disguised and subordinated to a freely working decorative will. This will becomes most expressive and most closely bound up with the spirit of architecture when by virtue of the stone-cutter's art the wall itself becomes decoratively alive. In the façade of the Cathedral of Milan the wall seems to disappear in a network of windows and

delicate lace-like perforations; sharpness in sky-line and spires is lost in elaborate carving. Again, the heaviness and simple strength of a wall may be made more expressive by the use of massive cornices, sparse openings, broad and plain window-facings, huge oaken doors sunk into the wall.

The range of ornamentation in architecture is a wide one: it includes fluting, panelling, tinting and gilding, stone and wood carving of capitals, pulpits, and benches, patterned bands, sculptured friezes, medallion work, inlays and edging, and work in metal. It offers many special problems: of craftsmanship and technique; of the historical development of patterns and their relation to styles; of tradition and innovation; of the invention and use of complicated geometrical designs; of imitation and adaptation of forms of plant and animal—the leaf, the lotus blossom, the rose, the nautilus, the snake,—of the use of symbolism.

Ornamentation in architecture serves to (1) give variety of interest to surfaces, (2) give animation, variety, and rhythmic swing to lines subdividing spaces and relating planes, (3) offer varying relief to masses and afford the eye points of support and interest in its plastic excursions, (4) guard against the impression of inert heaviness.

Certain aesthetic principles follow from this its function. It must not be superfluous or obtrusive, like a lot of flashy jewelry; far from being incongruous, it must fit into the general architectural scheme and its spirit; it must be smooth and persuasive, without inner discords; it must help rather than interfere with the rhythms of lines and masses; it must have a beauty of its own and a share in the life of what it adorns.

FITNESS

Vitruvius, having enumerated *venustas*, *utilitas*, and *decor* as the three architectural demands to be made, interprets *decor* in a way which combines and confuses what

suits the practical purpose of a building and what seems suitable in the sense of fitting in with our associations and our feeling of what is suitable. Picture galleries, he says, ought to have windows facing north so as to admit an even light; a building ought to be fitted to its site; temples dedicated to moon deities ought to be roofless; those dedicated to Mars ought to be of the simple, severe Doric order, while the soft, luxuriating Corinthian is suited to those in honor of Venus.

Fitness is one of the elements in the total aesthetic effect of architecture; the term itself must, however, be cleared up and its various uses separated.

Examples of three of these uses are: (1) a shoe fits, (2) a man is fit, (3) it is not fitting to laugh in a church. In the first there is the recognition of a definite purpose accomplished, with little or no interest in the manner and means of accomplishment; in the second it is a question of a whole set of purposes together with an interest in what physical fitness means and how it expresses itself; in the third the reference is to congruity rather than to purpose.

A building serves a purpose: it is a church, a railroad station, a home. In its construction and in the planning of details specific means are employed to solve specific practical problems. If our pleasure in architectural fitness were merely this, that we took delight in such detailed adapt-*edness*, and in nothing else, we should not get beyond a Babbitt-like enjoyment of a well appointed, well painted, efficiently floored, tiled, lighted, impressive, *bang-up* twentieth century home.

Fitness as an element in architectural effect is to be found in the second and third meanings of the term. It is an *adaptedness* to sets of purposes and interest in processes through which a general purpose unfolds itself and arouses a sense of the suitable. There must be added historical and emotional associations and a feeling for harmonious

organization. In the Grand Central Station in New York we are interested in the way in which a general purpose takes on articulated and differentiated form in train-shed, waiting-rooms, ticket-offices. Crowding, confusion, and waste of space are avoided. There are several train levels easily reached by sloping passages; the huge arched train-shed, rendered unnecessary by an electrified service has disappeared; the large central hall allows circulation where it is most needed, around ticket offices and gates; and the waiting-rooms are set aside and spared all confusion. Whenever a general purpose is worked into a structure in such fashion, a pleasurable sense of fitness results. All the parts cooperate efficiently; they are congruous, offering harmonies of line, mass, and color. Theirs is a common artistic as well as a common practical life. When Vitruvius calls it indecorous to combine a large and showy entrance and a shabby interior he is using fitness in the third sense. When he suggests that a temple of Venus ought to be of the Corinthian type he is basing his argument on religious and historical associations. Modern parallels are easily found. The Greek Temple is to us not only a triumph of strength and harmony of line, but an embodiment of the religious and civic life of the Greeks—a life and spirit it was admirably fitted to serve. There is then something incongruous in having this type used in a serving-station or having it house a banking enterprise, in which instances there is a lapse in function, and a lack of harmony between exterior and interior.

Such are the elements of architectural effect: light and shade, color and texture, vastness, mass and balance, patterned combinations, symmetry, proportionality, harmony, ornamentation, and fitness. Named singly, they play their part in combination; and it is well to remember that there are many pleasing ways in which they may be combined. Architecture is an art of many forms, of many moods, of many voices.

SCULPTURE

Sculpture in its historical development is closely related to architecture. In the great temples of Egypt, Assyria, and Greece; in the huge and intricate Gothic cathedrals; and in the slighter, commemorative and civic structures—tombs, shrines, triumphal arches, town halls, and fountains—it has served the double purpose of giving varied decorative effects to masses and lines and artistic form to structures, and of yielding a heightened impressiveness, social and spiritual, to objects, events, ideas. The monotony of skylines is broken by winged lions, palmettoes or figures in rows, that of cornices or wall spaces by mouldings and by sculptures in the round or in relief. Architectural forms are given lightness and life through the use of the lotus, the ivy, the rose and by chained patterns of snakes, lizards, and birds; pillars take human shape as caryatides or slaves or world-bearers; niches are filled with statues; Gothic portals are rich in sculptural reliefs. Phidias and his co-workers subordinated their art to the architectural scheme of the Parthenon. A brilliant example of their success are the pediment sculptures in the low triangle under the roof. Some of Goujon's finest work is within the setting of the Clock-Tower of the Louvre. The great French stone-cutters and metal-workers and the German wood-carvers of the Middle Ages became decoratively effective in their elaboration of altars, cornices, gates, pulpits, and tombs, like the Sebaldusgrab of Peter Vischer. To this first purpose must be added a second: that of heightened impressiveness. Much of Greek sculpture was under the sway of religious and patriotic motives: time has given to many of these fig-

ures an artificial isolation by tumbling them from their shrines and breaking away their religious emblems. The Phidian statues of Zeus and Athene, by the size and majesty of their design and the use of precious gold and ivory, gave volume and intensity of religious feeling to the temple that held them. Patriotism found plastic embodiment in the group of *Harmodius* and *Aristogeiton* and in the *Victory of Samothrace*. In Gothic churches figures of Mary ¹ and of the Saints, groups of the Crucifixion and the Pieta, wood and stone reliefs of the Birth of Christ ² and the Last Supper, of the Bearing of the Cross,³ and of pathetic biblical incidents such as the sacrifice of Jacob ⁴ give an added solemnity and emotional spirit to Christian worship.

There are, however, signs of an early independent development of sculpture. The art of the cave-men of the Reindeer Age offers many examples of animals carved in the round or in relief; that of the African negro is rich in amulets of bone and in grotesque human figures carved from wood. Some of the religious and social meaning of this work is lost to us; but the fact remains that it appears at an early cultural stage when only the most rudimentary architecture existed; and that it expresses, quite independently of decorative architectural patterning, *a will to the plastic rendering of organic life*.

It is here that the aesthetics of sculpture must begin, for it is this preoccupation with organic life that is the first mark of sculpture as an art. A world without animal life might be material for painting or poetry but not for sculpture. Mountains, huge blocks of stone, and trees are wholly unsuited as subjects, however complete the modeled likeness. There is in sculpture nothing to parallel landscape painting, where the introduction of animals and hu-

¹ Portail de la Vierge of Notre Dame.

² Pisano's Baptisterium at Pisa.

³ Ada Krafft.

⁴ Ghiberti or Brunellesco.

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mans is unacceptable to modern feeling. A rock may be used as a background or, as in some of Rodin's work, as part of the composition, a tree trunk for balance or support; trees or houses may fill spaces in a relief, and flowers may be used in a decorative design. Beyond this the sculptor cannot go. It is for this reason that a small spire, naturally felt as part of a large whole, if detached and put on a pediment, impresses us architecturally rather than sculpturally, however delicately carved.

Two obstacles to an understanding of sculpture are: variety of material and variety of type. Wood, marbles of different colors and textures, ivory, bronze, and stones like granite, basalt, and porphyry are used, singly or in combination; and their choice demands special treatment. Thus a marble statue in certain poses requires as a support a pillar or tree which the use of bronze would render superfluous. Bronze reflects light as ivory does not, and a marble surface has a granular aliveness which wood lacks. Carving in wood allows finer detail and a sharper edging than is possible in stone. Sculpture in relief, high or low, has its own decorative and pictorial problems. If analysis is to escape a tangle of qualifications, it must turn to sculpture in the round and to stone or bronze as material; in like manner an aesthetics of painting must turn to oil rather than to water color, and to canvases in preference to porcelain or ivory.

THE AESTHETIC MEANING OF SCULPTURE

In sculpture the material is tri-dimensional, heavy, and unresponsive. The tri-dimensional quality is preserved—it is not as in painting annulled and then re-created as a system of illusions. The heavy, recalcitrant block is shaped in response to an artistic idea, which means (1) exploiting sensuously the material itself, (2) building a visually and

dynamically satisfying system of lines, planes, and masses, (3) creating a semblance of organic life, (4) giving plastic form to psychic values. These four, with the accents differently placed by different artists, mark the aesthetic meaning of sculpture.

THE SENSUOUS EXPLOITATION OF THE MATERIAL

There is nothing in sculpture to match in intensity and range the natural beauty of colors in painting. The glister of certain stones, the luminosity of marble, the smoothness of ivory, the dusky splendors of bronze, the beauty of texture and of grain of certain woods are all less insistent, and are in part, at least, the result of polishing, burnishing, and scraping. The sculptor strives to make the most of what natural beauty there is. He chooses the marble of Paros, seeks flawless wood, sees the striking possibilities of blackish, grey-flecked basalt or mottled porphyry. He refrains from doing violence to his material with a coat of color, and does not destroy its oneness of effect by arbitrary combinations.⁵

THE CREATION OF A (A) VISUALLY AND (B) DYNAMICALLY SATISFYING SYSTEM OF LINES, PLANES, AND MASSES

VISUALLY SATISFYING: Imagine either a rectangular block or several blocks, one set above the other and at right angles to the line of vision, and then carved from it the *Apoxyomenos*. See the figure at first flat, as in a linear design. The monotony of the blocks has been broken by a varied system of lines: there is a flowing rhythm in the oval of the head, the short vertical of the neck, the slant outward of the left shoulder and inward of the arm, the gentle curving of loin and hip, and the long vertical of the leg.

⁵ Polychrome effects are not pleasing; even a slight tinting or gilding is unacceptable to modern feeling. Inlay work—ivory eyeballs, for instance—or the use of three kinds of stone, as in a statue in the Luxembourg where porphyry is used to simulate color effects in clothing, endanger the unity of impression. This is true of Klinger's *Beethoven*.

Across the body is the horizontal of the left forearm, and on the surface of the head are the short criss-cross curves of the hair. But the contours become differently beautiful and expressive as we walk around the statue. What were held to be lines are now felt as the edges of surfaces; and the surfaces in turn in their tilting and rounding enclose masses. Thus the statue from the turned head to the downward thrust of one arm and the lateral thrust of the other and the receding plane of the right leg, from the sharply edged hair to the plastic rendering of muscles, knee-cap, and toes, becomes visually effective as an organization of interrelated planes and masses. It seems like, and still unlike, the constructs of solid geometry. Schematic drawings of sculpture can be made which cause all representational values to disappear, and which make these relations stand out. It requires but the simple expedient of setting side by side a number of models of geometrical figures to discover marked differences in the pleasingness of their systems of lines and masses. A sphere is preferred to a truncated prism, a pyramid to a cone. It is the sculptor's task to make visually satisfying the cubical arrangement he creates; to give compactness and variety to his contours; offer congruities of lines and angles, ridge and scoop surfaces; and bring a plastic imagination to bear on his stacking of planes and ordering of masses. Rodin points to this problem in his theories and solves it in much of his sculpture. Great linear beauty marks the head and bent raised arm of his *Age of Bronze*, while an ugly top horizontal mars his *Shade*. He gives massiveness of contour to his figures, and tilts planes and roughens surfaces for the sake not only of catching shadows and affording the eye contrasts and individualities, but of offering a vivid impression of depth and of exploiting artistically cubical space. This to him is the secret of modeling, and he alludes to it again and again in his conversations with Gsell. The cubists at their extremest point of "absolute sculpture" go

far beyond this. Eliminating as such sculpture does all but a faint trace of representational and psychic values, it seems little else than an architectural grouping of geometrical models.

DYNAMICALLY SATISFYING: Even a cursory reading of Rodin and his work shows that for him lines, planes, and masses are *alive*: they stretch themselves, thrust, gather in, break through at this point or that; theirs is a tensional play. This dynamic quality must be traced to motor and kinetic empathy. Such empathy plays a part in other arts also: in architecture in the column, the arch, and the spire; in painting in vigorous verticals, flowing curves, marching diagonals; and in that equivalence of the suggested weight and directed power of colors and lines which is called balance.

Sculpture must not limit itself to effective visual organization; it must create mobile and balanced power. It is not by accident that the sculptor turns to organic life, which reveals such power. Franz Metzner in his *Earth* presents a seated figure with legs drawn up, back curved sharply downwards, and head bent over one knee. The composition has all the compactness of the artist's own *Leidtragender*, of Rodin's *Thinker* or of Barnard's *Hewer* but is more geometrical than they are. It has the appearance of a sphere; and this motif is repeated in the round, cropped head and the clenched fists. But this sphere is dynamically *alive*: not only do the tensed muscles suggest tremendous force; they mark sharply one moment in a self-directed bodily life which may unclench and shift its ground. An illustration of how important organic forms are to sculpture may be gained in this way. In imagining a rhomboid sharply tilted at an angle of forty-five degrees we get a disagreeable sense of toppling. But our sense of balance is not outraged when we turn to the sharp-angled *Fighter of Ravenna* and the unbalanced position of Herzog's *Ekstase*, simply because here

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the moment is caught as a moment, and we feel ourselves into human bodies which do not allow themselves to fall. Again, in Elkan's *Heldenklage*, a huge figure hewn from granite, the geometrical figure, a cube, is not allowed to absorb and annul kinetic and psychic values.

THE CREATION OF A SEMBLANCE OF ORGANIC LIFE

Throughout its history sculpture has created likenesses of animals and of the human form. It has been frankly representational of organic life as it appears in the lines and general build of a body, in the play of muscles and variegated moulding and texture of surfaces—representational in neither a very detailed nor complete sense. The material in which the sculptor works does not allow him to give the bloom of a cheek or delicate coloring of the skin, the fine lines of hair or cloth; and it yields him only limited chances of rendering the inner life of intellect, will, and feeling, which animates the body. Within these limits he for the most part seeks a truthful image of natural forms and of the spirit they express. Rodin is in the right when he exacts of the sculptor an accurate knowledge of anatomy and physiology. The structure of the body must be understood; so must its muscular adjustments to all manner of positions; and its living covering of flesh, cartilage, and skin. An unintentional violation of the truth of nature, in ignorance or because of a lack of technical skill, is felt to be a flaw. A departure which springs from a desire to gain an added symbolical or spiritual expressiveness is not so regarded. Rodin has the courage of such a practice.

Organic life is thought of in terms of a unified system and a self-expressive life, and they are related to the struggle for existence and its problems. In a plant this organization is as delicate as it is in an animal, but there is little or no impressive manifestation of power; and we find it difficult to

read plant life in terms of what might be called a *psyche*. The term *psyche* is not used in a metaphysical sense, but as a convenient characterization of consciousness, instincts, impulses, behavior, etc. through which human life and, in a more rudimentary way, animal life expresses itself. Rodin means something like this when he demands that sculpture reach the spirit in the form. The higher the advance in the animal scale the more individualized and the more varied and more directly revealed in the form itself does this inner life become—and therefore the more suitable for sculptural rendering. A fly-trapping orchid⁶ or a spider are unsuited to its purposes; not so the king of beasts of prey or a predatory woman.

THE GIVING PLASTIC SHAPE TO PSYCHIC VALUES

The task of sculpture is not ended with the creation of a pleasing system of lines and planes, and with the lifelike rendering of bodies; the problem of gaining psychic significance remains. This involves (1) a sympathetic reading in its own terms of the life whose semblance is given, (2) an imaginative and emotional reaching into the realm of the humanly significant, and (3) the embodiment in bronze or marble of certain generic human values.

(1) The *psyche* of a spirited horse or a fox terrier is partially expressed in lines, movements, and individual responses. The rendering of an animal must not be superficial, fanciful or purely generic. It must be a creation from within the instincts and moods of this life—a patient and sound reading of some individualized text from the language of plastic forms. Such a sympathetic reading is more completely possible and of greater interest when the representation is of the human *psyche*. The sculptural effectiveness of figures like the *Theseus* of the Parthenon, the

⁶ Some such trap may be read into Rudolf Belling's *Dreiklang*, a cubist design with an effective motor suggestiveness.

Drunken Silenus, the *Niobe* and the *Laocoon*, Rodin's *Eustache de St. Pierre*, Lederer's *Fencer*, and Barnard's *Lincoln* is to be sought here as well as in a satisfying organization of spaces, skilful modeling and lifelike rendering; they affect us from within outwards. It is what life means to this god or death and its agony, to this or that mortal; what the strain and perplexity of thinking means to this man; what a bout means to a skilful fencer, who is bending and testing his rapier—the spiritual moment—that counts heavily.

(2) There is something to be added to this sympathetic recording of the inner life of individuals. It is not merely what contemplative ease, grief, agony, pride in skill are to these men that the sculptor aims to show: it is what these things mean to him imaginatively and emotionally, and through him to us as sharers in a common humanity. In this sense he is a reshaper, with a larger interpretative purpose circling about and settling into the lineaments of his work. Of this Rodin offers many instances.

(3) Very striking is the self-imposed simplicity of sculpture, which turns away from intricacies bodily and mental and contents itself with draped or naked bodies, single or grouped, and a narrow range of psychic values. In its ideal content it favors the typical, the generic. Man-centred like all art, it exploits in its own way the relation between mind and matter, and rests at least part of its appeal on our interest in a few recurrent complications and responses. This is an incomplete list of such values:

SELF-COMPOSURE AND THE CALM POISE OF A MIND AT REST: This is best seen in Greek sculpture. Illustrations of it are the *Theseus*, the *Hermes*, statues of *Hera*, *Demeter*, *Athene*, and many fine heads. It is lacking in baroque sculpture, and only a few of the figures and busts of Rodin have it.

HEALTH; STRENGTH; POWER: The youthful body in its glowing health and easy strength, the broad-based mus-

cular and mental power of maturity, the mind in its stretch from promise to ease and forceful performance; such things we find pleasure in, in answer to an instinct in the service of life. To this preference sculpture usually appeals. Examples are to be found in Greek athletic sculpture. It may also be seen in Donatello's *David*, in Michelangelo's *Slaves* and in his *David*, and in Rodin's *Adam* and the *Age of Bronze*. When there is, on the contrary, a sculptural rendering of weakness, senility, defective development or perversion, it is because of a search for other values than those of youth or strength.

It is to be noted that a statue expressive of great power need not be beautiful in a formal sense. Muscular development may be too extreme for either beauty or balanced health. The *Doryphoros* and the *Disk-Thrower* show a union of strength and beauty; in the *Athletes* of Klinger and Stuck there is some divergence; in the *Farnese Hercules* there is an utter sacrifice of beauty.

ALIVENESS; ALERTNESS; MOBILITY: It was something of an achievement for sculpture to substitute for the inertness of a figure standing at rest, in frontal position with legs closed and arms hanging close to the sides, the aliveness, lightness, and suggested mobility of the body within a great range of positions, and to put in the place of a mask-like face, expressive of a crude and stolid mental life, an individualized, mobile facial expression. In view of this development it seems strange to find sculpture often interpreted in terms exclusively of rest.

This is not a question merely of the sweep of a body caught at a moment of extreme motion, as in the *Disk-Thrower*, or the figures from the frieze of Halicarnassus; nor one of imaginatively completed rhythm, as in Meunier's *Mower* or in Kolbe's *Dancer*, who seems to turn slowly as we watch her. Rather is it a matter of putting into inert marble something of the infinite mobility, physical and pschical, of human

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life, and of giving our interest in that mobility a peculiarly toned satisfaction. Wherever there is in modern sculpture a trend away from such lightness back to the heaviness of Egyptian and Assyrian sculpture it is to be explained in either of three ways: as a mistaken reading of Rodin's theory of massiveness; as an attempt to allow simple space values their full force, with no distraction on the part of the psychic (Hildebrand); or as a desire to bring art back to the elemental.

EMOTIONAL RESPONSES: Extreme emotional effects are much rarer in sculpture than in music or poetry; not even the *Niobe* or the *Laocoon* match the intensity and poignancy of appeal possible in the other arts. The *will to emotional upheaval*, which is so tumultuously present in tragedy, here adopts much quieter ways—not that the sculptor fears a destruction of formal beauty, but he understands his inability to give a searching and subtle portrayal of emotions at their crest. Within this its quieter range sculpture appeals to our interest in seeing embodied and sharing common human emotional responses and moods: grief, anger, remorse, love, adoration, ecstasy, despondency, melancholy, gaiety. Thus we are made to share in the remorse of Rodin's *Eve* and in the vision of death of his *Burghers of Calais*, in the sorrow of Michelangelo's *Pieta*, in the gaiety of dancing Tanagra figurines and Greek reliefs, and in the joyful abandon of Carpeaux' *Dance*.

PERSONALITY IN ITS PURPOSES AND COSMIC RELATIONS: Here again the resources of sculpture are limited; they fall short of those of tragedy, which concerns itself with man's character and man's fate—with the network of human purposes and with man's struggle to live his personal life within the context of the laws of a universe. Sculpture can give only a simple and brief excerpt from the mass of human purposes and only a hint of man's cosmic relations. Scraping the body of oil and sweat; extracting a thorn from

a foot; dealing death or fleeing from it; throwing the discus or swinging a scythe; dancing, wrestling, hunting, bathing, mothering; the Greek holding up the limp body of the wounded; the Roman abducting a Sabine woman; the Gaul committing self-murder; a youth pouring a libation; a faun playing a pipe—such are the simple actions sculpture in the round can give effectively. If it attempts more, it becomes disagreeably topical and complicated, and unintelligible as well, for it cannot render purpose in its inception and follow it through its stages to a goal. It stops short often even of the simple actions and purposes cited, and offers bodies at rest, with a frank unfolding of their surfaces and a quiet undirected mental life.

The genius of sculpture does not lie in the domain of metaphysics: cosmic problems, of unfailing interest to mankind, are not natural to it. The philosophical content of Greek sculpture does not go beyond that of the mythology which gave the material. But the very choice from its circle of myths of the serene and humanized deities of Olympus in preference to the darker, less intelligible creations of the popular imagination and the rendering in vivid form of the struggle between Centaurs and Lapiths, between Gaia and her giant sons and Athene, and of Fate, Sleep, and Death in the sepulchral reliefs shows a thoughtful bias and an interest in an emerging Cosmos and its relation to man. The mysteries of the Christian religion find expression in certain types of medieval sculpture and give them intensity and depth. Among the moderns, Bartholomé, in his *Monument aux Morts*, Meunier, Metzner, and Rodin aim to make their work suggestive of larger philosophical problems. Rodin claims to be an interpreter of what stirs and strains in the process of life. The conception of his *Hell Gate* is a cosmic text on a grand scale; single creations of his, such as the *Hand of God*, *The Wave*, as well as his work in the aggregate, reveal the use of a bold symbolism and the presence of

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a philosophical purpose bearing down on human shapes as they lust, struggle, reflect, rebel, submit—as they come and go.

AESTHETIC TESTS

There is the closest possible relation between the knowledge of the aesthetic meaning of sculpture, as that meaning gives itself through a study of the elements of sculptural effect, and the question of what norms are to be applied to test the excellence of a figure or a group in marble or in bronze. The decision must not be left to mere like or dislike; nor is any service done by general principles applicable to all the arts, unless they are modified in the light of an understanding of what sculpture, as an art with problems and resources of its own, means to be, and can do.

What follows is in no sense a complete list; it is merely an attempt to mark some of the essential tests in any intelligent appraisal of the artistic worth of a piece of sculpture.

AN ARTISTIC IDEA THAT IS WORTHWHILE AND MASTERED

WORTHWHILE: Artistic idea and subject, often confused, are not the same. Two paintings of the Madonna, two statues of Apollo or David, two plays dealing with the same historical personages and events are the same in subject, but may differ widely, as Schiller's *Maid of Orleans* and Shaw's *Saint Joan* do, in artistic conception and purpose. Not only are subject and idea confused, but a moral bias is yielded to, which accepts some subjects and artistic purposes as ennobling and sets itself sharply against others as degrading—commending a statue of Joan of Arc and looking askance at Rodin's amorous groups or at his *Balzac*.

The first step in the appraisal of a work of sculpture is an understanding of what the artist means to give. He ought to be taken first of all on his own terms. The later Greek ages did not see in gods and goddesses what the age of

Phidias saw; interpretation and rendering are quite different. If there is distortion of the female figure, as in Archipenko, Mowbray-Clarke, Lehmbruck, for the sake of symbolism or expressionism, the distortion must be accepted as an essential moment in the working out of an artistic idea which must be understood before it is either approved or rejected.

The second step is to discover the degree of worthwhileness in the artistic idea and in the individualized and stressed rendering given by the artist. Not all artistic texts nor all personal readings are of the same worth.

How is this matter of worthwhileness to be decided? It may at once be said that every phase and form of life and every reading of it, ranging from humble copying through sympathetic reshaping to the wildest extravaganzas of self-expression have in them elements of worthwhileness. As for the attempt to work out a definitive scale of such values, that must always for aesthetics remain a partial failure in view of irreducible personal preferences. All that can be done is to name a few tests which can be applied to the artistic idea. These are: (1) beauty, (2) character, (3) plastic quality, (4) psychic significance. Thus the *Apoxyomenos*, the *Hermes*, the *Apollon Sauroktonos*, the *Dancing Satyr*, and the *Venus de Milo* exploit different types and stages of the natural beauty of the body; Stuck's *Athlete*, stocky and unattractive in its lines, Rodin's *Thinker*, and Barnard's *Lincoln* sacrifice beauty to character; the *Laocoon*, the so-called *Seneca of Herculaneum*, the *Dying Gaul*, the *Burghers of Calais*, and the *Vieille Heaulmière* aim at a combination of plastic and psychic values—they force us to see tensional masses and ridged, pitted individualized surfaces where we ordinarily see only bulk and smooth stretches—they arouse feeling, appeal to our imagination and widen and deepen our view of life. Hildebrand, loyal to aesthetic ideas of his own, is satisfied with mere values of line and mass.

MASTERED: Whether the artistic idea has been mas-

tered in the sense of being completely and adequately embodied in plastic form depends on (1) its suitableness and (2) the technical skill of the artist. Certain subjects and ideas fall outside the realm of sculpture; others admit of only partial success in the carrying out. How childish the Roman allegories of the Nile and its bends and of Father Tiber and his children! Here is not the life of a river nor a vivid picture of its tributaries. The sculptors chose the unsuitable. Painting an allegorical figure of Rumor, as Apelles did, or modeling a towering helmeted God of War, sword in hand, are interesting experiments which must fall short of expressing what rumor and war really mean, and of what other more resourceful arts can do with such subjects. Rodin's *La Vieille Heaulmière*, which gives only one of the contrasted pictures of youth and old age, cannot match in symbolism Villon's ballad, which gives both. Again, there may be a failure of technical skill. The sculptor may have failed to carry through a movement of the arm to the shoulder and the back; he may have left an unresponsive stiffness in the face or the draperies of an agitated or fast moving body; he may have overleapt himself in trying for the sublime; he may have been unwise in his choice of methods.

AN EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION OF CUBICAL SPACE AND ITS VALUES OF MASS AND LINE

In early Egyptian and Greek statues the organization is a simple one; an upright body is shown in frontal position, with arms hanging along the sides and legs close together; headdress and hair, massively treated, are made to fill the right angle of collar-bone and neck. Roughly speaking, the cubical space gained by slipping a hollow oblong over the figure is filled by the stone or bronze. But such a scheme, while restful at first in its compactness and balance, tends

to become monotonous. How limited the aesthetic appeal of such a pose, quite apart from the fact that it fails to do justice to the flexible life of the human body! Turn the body into a diagonal from the feet or the hips, swing out or bend arms and legs, bend it with a thrust of shoulder or knee, or raise it to the rhythmic movement of the dance, and all sorts of patterns, interesting in their variety, will offer the sculptor opportunities and problems. There will be unfilled spaces, tilted planes, balancing masses, crossing lines; there will be motor stresses to be watched and set in relation. Variety is subjected to a discipline which does not sacrifice the least of its manifold and individual accents. A bold and in the main successful conquest of complex space values is Rodin's group *The Burghers of Calais*. Failures are his *Nuit de Mai* and *La Centauresse*. An ambitious and unsuccessful composition is Rudolph Maison's *Negro and Panther*. A panther has completed its leap from above, burying teeth and claws in the shoulder of the negro, whose body, touching the ground with one foot, is borne down straight to an angle of forty degrees. The intentional lack of balance is mannered; the right arm in its stiff separateness of line seems in no sense part of a living body; there is an ugly lack of correlation between the vertical of the panther and the diagonal of the negro; the area of interest—the meeting heads and shoulders of man and beast—is too limited.

BEAUTY AND CHARACTER OF SURFACES

What the sculptor can make of surfaces is one test of the worth of his work. Unenlivened as these are by the play of color, they must be made pleasing, significant, individually alive in other ways—by a delicate sense of touch which strokes, lingers, or hints with the slightest of touches—accentuates—differentiates. Thus the onlooker is offered tactile values that keep his interest from flagging. Too smooth

or highly polished a surface is monotonous in its effects. If, by contrast, there is an immoderate scooping, pitting or ridging, the feeling for surface as surface is lost. In the best Greek work the nude or half draped body is made to yield an interplay of rough and smooth: in the *Hermes* the contrast between the carefully modeled irregularity of the hair and the smooth forehead; in the *Faun* a ridged diagonal of cloth against the smooth elastic skin of a youthful body; in the *Doryphoros* the contrast between the trunk with plates of muscle felt to be flexible and the long unaccented surfaces of the thighs. Incidental decorative effects there are—the shield of the *Athene Parthenos*, the sandaled foot of the *Hermes* are examples—but in the main the elaboration of surfaces, even in Greek reliefs, is in relation to the plastic and vital motives which give sculpture its meaning.

TRUTHFUL RENDERING

Granted that there are types of sculpture that limit themselves to an organization of lines and spaces,⁷ and others that seek only the expression of moods, unconcerned with the paralleling of natural forms, the fact remains that sculpture in its historical development and in its great achievements has offered itself as a representational art of definite and limited purpose—rendering incompletely, and within conventions of its own, the bodies of humans and animals. We have then a right to ask with respect to the sculptor's work, "Is this a truthful rendering? Does it show a knowledge of the human body, its possible positions, its muscles, ligaments, joints, and their relations? If the sculptor has chosen a violent moment—a runner straining, a wrestling bout, a horse rearing—has he felt himself into the violence of that moment, as McKenzie does in his athletic sculpture; and

⁷ Cf. Belling's explanation of his *Dreiklang*: "Der Dreiklang ist Raum—und Formbegriff. Das ist meine Auffassung der Plastik: das Einfangen der Luft."

has he given in his transcription a truthful picture of what that strain would mean for each and every part of such bodies?"

Two difficulties appear: (1) nature herself is constantly varying her forms and departing from what seems to be her types, and (2) the artist often intentionally departs from nature.

Torsos, arms, and legs differ in relative lengths; heads, breasts, or hands, in shape; the distance between eyes varies from face to face. It is true that certain shapes and proportions are more pleasing than others, and that nature in her happiest, artistic moods—which are by no means frequent—suggests norms which the sculptor may turn into a canon of forms. But exceptional forms, whether beautiful or ugly, or highly individualized faces, of which Roman sculpture shows many, are not felt to be unnatural. But the line of the freakish must not be reached. Unlike painting, which is highly individualized and concerns itself with the less objective and permanent manifestations of nature, such as color and light, sculpture, narrow in its possible effects, is committed to what in nature suggests stability and type. The typical itself is an imaginative construct superimposed on the multitudinous and variational in nature. For this reason as well as for others it is difficult to apply to sculpture the test of truthful rendering of natural forms.

Intentional deviations on the part of the artist are common. Rodin's *exagération des formes* is only one striking instance. Accents are shifted; there are strange, forced unions and much slurring and dragging—all this for the sake of a reading, which instead of following quietly and faithfully the natural plastic values of the body, seeks one or all of these things: (1) individuality of interpretation and treatment, (2) added decorativeness, (3) increased emotional or imaginative intensity, (4) symbolism. Of (1)

little need be said: deforming such as is to be found in Cezanne's fruit pieces, Van Gogh's landscapes, and sculptured figures as far apart as those of Rodin, Epstein, and Archipenko is due not to defective vision, but to the stamping of nature with the impress of sharply personal artistic technique and purpose. Illustrations of (2) are as old as the Reindeer Age and as new as the newest of the *art nouveau*: proportions are altered—an unusual slenderness, for example, is given the human figure; there are decorative arrangements of torso, arms, and legs, and of animal forms; a group of figures is reshaped and reduced to a flowing rhythmic pattern. Manship, eclectic in his sculpture, as Davies is in his painting, shows a fondness for such rhythmic modifications. Great emotional intensity (3) may be gained by a boldness which breaks through the natural, and simplifies and falsifies forms. Rodin's *Burghers of Calais*, Barnard's *Lincoln*, and Metzner's *Leidtragender* are examples. Of (4) symbolism it may be said that it creates or reshapes for the sake of a meaning which is not nature's by right. It suggests rather than imitates and inclines toward the imaginative and fantastic. In Rodin's *Hell Gate* it parallels certain creations of the *Inferno*, which in turn is a distorted and morally weighted vision of sin and punishment; in Rodin's *Wave*, with its tumbling and crested group of figures, it uses human forms slightly modified to express what is not theirs to express. In the Oscar Wilde Memorial in Paris it assumes a bold and sinister creative form.

THE AESTHETICS OF THE RELIEF

Relief may be low, giving bodily surfaces with but a slight rounding, or high, with bodies springing forth and almost detached. It may appear within the compactness of a cameo, a coin, a plaque, or medallion; it may march as a frieze straight along the walls of a building; it may wind it-

self around a vase or be the circular pattern of a column, a fountain or a pulpit.

It is much less independent than sculpture in the round; it plays a decorative part in the elaboration of architectural effects, and is allied to painting in much of its technique.

A surface is to be filled and to be made decoratively attractive. This surface exists as the actual ground of stone or metal from which the plastic pattern or composition of figures and groups is to emerge. Another parallel surface must be construed imaginatively in the foreground, touching the projecting parts and keeping the whole scheme within an organized field of depth. A mixing of high and low relief, resulting in something like a relief map, is not acceptable to the eye; nor is a diagonal slanting away from the onlooker. Again, the figures are seen from one angle—there is no walking around them—and intervals are more obtrusively present than they are in sculpture in the round.

While sculpture in relief is capable of complex effects, it is best to take it first at its simplest. Suppose the flat circle of a coin to be almost completely filled with a head. Sharpness and neatness of line are to be looked for; so is very fine decorative detail. If a draped dancer is worked out of a rectangle, there are the additional problems of effective placing in relation to surrounding and intervening spaces, of rhythm, and of balanced coordination of lines. The impression given by such a dancer in relief is quite different from that of a dancer in the round, for the kinetic element so strong in sculpture—the muscular response to self-expressive force and vitality, as in Rodin, Maillol, and Mestrovic—is here only faintly present. It is true that in many reliefs—the metopes, the frieze of Halicarnassus, the Borghese Vase—struggle and violently gestured movement play a part, and that the feeling oneself into plunging horsemen or rapt dancers means a muscular as well as a motor response. But what impresses most is the compositional

scheme in the metopes, and in the others the linear rhythms and the varied pattern.⁸ It is not from accident that dancers and processions appear so often in reliefs, for they allow a rhythmic development and visual surprises in the way of constantly re-settling lines. The rhythm may be slow and the design stately as in the Panathenaic procession in the Parthenon frieze where lines are repeated and varied slowly, or the movement may be fast and the curves bold as in a Maenad rout. Many of the principles of composition in painting may be carried over to sculpture in relief, but the latter, while more complex and less dynamic than sculpture in the round, allows itself a looseness of design and often a rhythm which seems to go on unendingly. Relatively simple and sharp in its technique, it cannot rival painting in effects of perspective and atmosphere; and it is true to the genius of all sculpture in its choice of organic life, leaving to one side many of the things the painter delights in.

The appreciation of sculpture in the round demands a geometrical imagination—a clear sense of lines and planes in their relations—and, in addition, a sense of all the straining and balanced forces at work in the linear and voluminar scheme. This scheme presents itself with a completeness and palpableness which not every one can enjoy.

About a relief there is a suggestion of incompleteness, of pictorial allusiveness and lightness which makes it immediately pleasing. Rodin, who in his *Thinker* and in his *L'homme qui marche* has caught the pure spirit of geometrical and kinetic sculpture, has in his *Paolo and Francesca*, *The Wave*, *Thought*, and *Springtime* given plastic form to the softer, slighter, more purely decorative spirit of the relief.

⁸ Movement is felt as rhythm rather than as force. Lambeaux' *Human Passions* is an example of this.

PAINTING

Painting, like architecture, is a much wronged art, but there are different reasons for the misunderstanding. A building is useful, a picture is not. In its development as an art it has come to stand in looser and looser relations to life; if then it is misread, it must be because of other distorting influences.

The truth of the matter is this: a painting seems to represent something; the common man who is very much at home in the world he lives in—a world of familiar objects, singly or grouped, such as men and women, mountains, rivers, trees, houses, boats, flowers, animals, and of human feelings and relations to be accepted or suppressed—imagines that it is this world that the painter aims to give. He insists that everything in this world is worth putting on canvas, and holds that what is given must be a faithful copy. It is thus that he judges—and misjudges—painting. If he happens to be a paunchy profiteer sitting for his portrait, and the gift of seeing himself as he is has been mercifully withheld, he will put to the score of judicious and effective copying the colorful and subtly expressive organization which the great artist can create, even with a paunchy profiteer in front of him. Velasquez, court painter though he was of unpromising models, achieves a delicacy and mellowness of touch, a masterful and penetrative simplicity of design and execution which are peculiarly his own. Elinor Wylie's psychology in *Castilian* is probably wrong

Velasquez took a pliant knife
And scraped his palette clean;

He said, "I lead a dog's own life
Painting a king and queen.

.
"I am sick of painting painted hags
And bad ambiguous dwarves.

.
He squeezed out color like coins of gold
And color like drops of wine.

.
He burnt the rags in the fireplace
And leaned from the window high;
He said, "I like that gentleman's face
Who wears his cap awry."

This is the gentleman, there he stands,
Castilian, sombre-caped,
With arrogant eyes, and narrow hands
Miraculously shaped.

but the last phrase, *miraculously shaped*, hits the mark. The man outside the window was merely a clue; the painter saw what no chance passerby could see, and he reshaped what he saw to a marvelous painting. Rembrandt, likewise, in his portraits of himself, took common and grotesquely ugly features, set them in mottled light and shade, suffused them with soft reds, browns, and yellows, and gave them psychic depth and organizational strength. He saw himself with a painter's vision.

If painting is not to be misunderstood and its aesthetic secret not to remain hidden, an answer must be found for the questions: what is it that the painter means to give? how is the world he sees different from the world the common man lives in? what does he work in and how does he gain his effects? how does he carry his vision over into the living world of art?

THE WORLD WE LIVE IN

By *the world we live in* I mean the world as it presents itself during any day's span to an ordinary, none too reflective consciousness. It is not the philosopher's world—puzzled over, unified, made over in the image of a subtle intellect which takes neither its objects nor the validity of its processes for granted. It is a world of time and space; an experience of sounds, colors, shapes in their changes and their spatial thereness; a world of practical relations. It is a challenge to purpose, is to be valued for its uses, and is to be reacted to in terms of feeling and thinking.

Part of this world the common man sees represented on canvas—not the changes and uses, but objects as they appear in space, and as they mean something to him practically, emotionally, imaginatively. Suppose him to be looking at the picture of a pastoral scene: timbered land in the background, barns, fields with cattle grazing, a small stream with clumps of bushes. He does not see it in terms of a *Farmer's Journal*—give him credit for that—but he does see it as true to life or not, as conforming or not, in shape, color, and general appearance, to what he is familiar with and knows to be so or so in actual life. He fails to discover here what has not been forced upon him in actual experience: delicate shadings of color, atmospheric effects, the character of lines, the relationships of masses. He is interested in the subject and expects verisimilitude and the same feelings a real pastoral scene would give him. He knows that a load of hay cannot be driven in this barn, but insists on it looking like a real barn, nevertheless. Or, in a different mood, he becomes sentimental over the quiet of a rural scene. Of either of these misreadings the casual visitor to museums is often guilty; occasionally they appear in art journals and histories of painting. It is they that provoke an equally false reading of painting as mere pattern.

THE PAINTER'S WORLD

The *Painter's World* is first of all a world of and for the eye. He is interested in objects only in so far as they can be painted, and they can be painted directly only in their visual aspects. What is called a barn has many more meanings than the visual one; and as a purely visual object it has many aspects, varying with the angle of the eye, the distance, the light. It is with these visual aspects that the painter concerns himself. Thus his world is, in the first instance, an impoverished one, made the poorer by being stripped of every purpose, by the ignoring of practical relations, and by the choice of this or that appearance, to the neglect of all others. But it is also, in a special sense, a richer world than that of the common observer, since the painter sees the slightest of shadings and varying reflections, and responds to subtle relationships of line. Passing along a street in New York, I once saw within the window-frame of an apartment a strikingly beautiful girl in a flowered dress, with a parrot perched on her arm. For a moment I saw with a painter's eye—the graceful pose, the curve of the arm and cheek, lights and shadows on the draperies and silk, harmonies and contrasts of color. But only for a moment, and with no power to give artistic expression to what I saw; and then I went off into a curiosity of imaginings and meanings which took me far away from the painter's world. I was back in the world we live in, wondering about the place in it of this bit of the exotic in such a uniformity of city walls and windows.

The painter has a delicately responsive eye, and is visually selective and re-creative. But his activity goes beyond this, for he unconsciously gives form to what he sees. He has a feeling for structural unity; where there is no such unity in nature he supplies it. In so structureless and amorphous a thing as the raging sea he feels the force-lines as he feels

them in so completely formed a thing as a yacht. A haphazard collection of things—fruit piled, a crowd, plants and trees growing in a wild confusion—he endows with a common rhythmic or decorative life. More than that—he gives them unity of *meaning-in-form*; catching them up in a oneness of vision, of mood, of personality.

THE PAINTER'S WORK

This the *Painter's World* is to be expressed. It is to be given the form and significance of art within the medium of the artist's choice, and through the disciplined resources and aims of painting. This is the *Painter's Work*. If this work is to be understood it must be studied in terms of the medium used, the devices employed, the goal aimed at, and the type chosen.

THE MEDIUM

The medium is color, extracted from various substances, mixed with different binding agencies—oil, chalk, water—and applied with the necessary preparation and finish to surfaces of many kinds—paper, canvas, stone, wood, porcelain, silk. The pigments used, the ways of mixing colors and glazing, the surfaces chosen are of great interest to the special student; they concern the aesthetician only in so far as they can be shown to make an aesthetic difference in the painting. This is not a hard task. The impressionists have proved that greater brilliancy may be gained by putting small patches of color side by side and allowing the eye to mix them than by the ordinary chemical mixing. An attempt might be made to have water color, pastel, porcelain painting, and oil painting on canvas render the same subject with an exact duplication of design and color values. Failure would result. Colors on porcelain have a

peculiar transparency and flatness; pastels have a dry quality and do not favor, as oils do, rhythmic fluidity; in water colors it is difficult to gain plastic modeling. The spirit and general impression differ in the four cases. There is a charming allusiveness about water color; pastels are flaky or crumbly; porcelain painting is naive, with a direct and rather shallow sensuousness of color; painting in oil is subtle, with a depth and richness of its own.

The primary colors—red, green, and violet-blue, or yellow—and black and white variously mixed give the painter a wide range of possible effects in color. By mixing a color with that to the right or left of it in the spectrum he changes its *hue*; by adding to a color white or black he changes its *tint* and *shade*—thus there are light greens and dark greens, bright blues and dull blues; by getting a color at its purest, fullest, and intensest he gains *saturation*.

There are certain facts about colors and their combinations which are recognized in painting. They are set down here in a very sketchy way. Colors are spoken of as warm or cold, passionate or quiet, pleasing or less pleasing. The numerous studies that have been made in color preferences have proved inconclusive; so have attempts to affix to each color a definite emotional quality or suggested image. Early stages in racial and individual development show a liking for reds and yellows—two colors which are intense and inciting as browns and blues are not. All colors, however, have acquired a symbolism and an emotional suggestiveness which vary with custom, situation, and mood. Again, a color may be pleasing in one hue or shade and not in another; or its pleasingness may change with area or texture. Often colors seem to differ kinetically or in the suggestion of weight. There is a blazing energy about certain bright reds wholly lacking in pink. Orange seems heavier than lemon-yellow, and dark colors have more weight than light ones. Certain colors seem to recede, others to move toward us.

As for combinations, the first two facts to be noted are those of simultaneous and successive contrast. If two colors are put down in adjacent spaces they modify each other. Put red next to green, and it appears brighter, and the green acquires a yellowish tinge. Orange next to green appears reddish and makes the green appear bluish. In the combination black and yellow, the black appears violet or bluish; the yellow, light and faded. If green is set beside black the green is yellowish and the black gains a reddish tinge. In so far as the painter aims at visual impressions he must have an understanding of such facts of simultaneous contrast in the joining of his color patches and in the grounding or general setting of his colors. Successive contrast refers to the appearance, as an after image, of complementary colors—as of blue and orange or red and green blue.

LIGHT AND SHADE

In the visual world which the painter observes and reshapes there are accents other than those of color. Objects are in shadow or brilliantly illuminated, vivid or vague and wavering; evenly reflected or dappled; glinting with high lights or receding with edges of darkness. Such accents may be rendered by the use of blacks, greys, and whites alone; by the use of a single color in various shades and brilliancies, as of browns in a sepia print; or by an elaborate color scheme full of contrasts, and revealing in whites and blacks great wealth and depth of color.

LINE

An object shorn of its uses and presented as visual appearance strikes the eye not merely as a varied mass of color and a varying play of light and shade, but also as a system of lines. Lines have a direct natural expressiveness. Curves

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and jagged lines affect us differently; so do heavy and thin lines. Slanting lines have a motor quality which horizontals lack; the latter in turn are restful and relaxing in a way in which verticals are not. Delicacy, decisiveness, and emphasis all contribute to our pleasure in a line; so does its varied life in space. This life, in both single lines and their combinations, must be free and rhythmic. Simple geometrical schemes cannot be used widely in painting as they can be in architecture. Thus a line which is a straight horizontal and then turns into a half circle whose diameter is of equal length may be used effectively in a repetitional decorative pattern of a building, but seems too mechanical in painting.

Lines in our visual experience are edges of surfaces, and these surfaces are marked off by differences of color or texture. In either case there may be a sharp break or a partially defined transition. We are not ordinarily conscious of the line as something independent. It has become more and more the practice of modern painters to delimit in terms of color—to define line and linear relations as color—and of light and shade. This means that a black and white copy of a Cézanne or Renoir amounts not merely to a sacrifice of color effects, on which they lean heavily, but to a loss of, at least, part of their linear scheme.

The edging that lines give to surfaces is not only one at right angles to the eye, it is carried back from the eye at different angles into deep space. This receding expressiveness of lines forms part of the problem of perspective; color gradations and differences of shading are the other parts.

Lines also act as clues to the visual meaning of objects; this is their representational expressiveness. A clever draughtsman like Busch can put down a few whirls, dashes, and sweeping lines and make them call forth supplementary relational effort on our part—and behold, the few linear

clues become comic figures of men and women. In like manner a painter can make a few color patches or lines visually expressive of objects. We need only step in very close to a painting to discover this *expressive illusion*; what in the distance seemed a complete and definitely worked out object now turns out to be nothing but bits of color and line—hints we had perceptually completed. This is merely one phase of a technique of illusion to which painting is committed in putting the semblance of a tri-dimensional, visual world on a flat surface and seeking to render within its narrower range and slenderer resources the complexities of color, light, and line which the world about us offers. This very fact forces imitation to become in part a creative reshaping. But what is back of such reshaped likenesses? What is the painter's aim in working in a special medium and in using skilfully the technical devices of his art?

THE GOAL AIMED AT

A plausible but false answer would be this: the painter is aiming at the illusion of a perfect copy of some natural object. What nature accomplishes so easily, he seeks to match, color for color, line for line—his ambition roused and his ingenuity challenged and tested by the difficulties of his task. A portrait painter in front of his sitter and a landscape painter who has set up his easel in a field seem to be doing that. But it has been shown that the artist, even before he has put brush to canvas, has stepped out of the world we live in into a world of his own—a world more purely visual, and more subtle and varied in its values of color and line. Where we see blacks he may see purples; what to us is mere expanse, is to him variegated texture. Even if he were to copy what he sees, we should be far from admitting it to be a likeness of objects as we know and see them. The impressionists were criticized for what was held to be

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a lurid, unnatural coloring. But the painter does not copy literally the object he sees. He modifies it, partly from necessity and partly from choice. The nature and the resources of his medium make a paralleling of line and color values impossible. There is also a voluntary modifying of what he sees: a rearrangement of lines, an intensifying of contrasts or a soft blending, new accents of light and shade, a new massing of effects. Back of this rearrangement are the transforming influences of a personal vision. When distortion has a place in this vision, as in El Greco or Cézanne, it is often mistakenly read as a physical flaw in seeing or as some mental twist—as copying still, but under a fatal handicap.

If imitation is to be rejected as the painter's goal, what is it he aims at? It is what has for want of a better name been called *pictorial form*. The secret of the aesthetic value of a painting lies not in the verisimilitude of its colors and lines—its representational accuracy and lifelikeness—but in a certain creatively personal organization.

The painter's response to what is about him has been shown to be one of seeing objects as shapes, and of feeling himself into the subtle relationships which visually mark such shapes. Thus he sees a chair, not as a thing in common use, but as a system of lines and planes in color. To have this painter's vision is not yet to be a painter. The task remains of using the materials of life—its colors and forms—as starting-points for the creation, on canvas or something else suitable and by means of brush and pigment skillfully handled, of a new and significant unity, representational and intensely personal, which may be called *pictorial form*.

What is this pictorial form and how is it gained?

At the very outset there is this difficulty: pictorial form is in its organized variety and meaning one and indivisible, and yet cannot be discussed except in terms of a *seriatim*

analysis of what has a part in its creation—artistic idea and subject, design with all its special values, and representational and imaginative factors.

The matter may be put to the test in this fashion. In a black and white copy of a painting one important part of its aesthetic value—color—has dropped out; there remain the compositional unity of mass and line, and the representational values. Turn the black and white copy upside down, you have altered the perspective, destroyed the compositional scheme, and broken down the relation between the subject of the painting and the design. Such a piecemeal elimination of elements of aesthetic effect might incline to the belief that what is called a picture is a subject arranged in a linear scheme, with values of mass, aerial perspective, and color added. Nothing could be farther from the truth. Rather is the subject seen as personal vision, emotionally and imaginatively touched, and as design—the colors and lines at once play their part in relating, setting off, and individualizing planes; and the lines have motor, decorative, and emotional expressiveness. The aesthetic meaning of the picture lies in all these together—and in none of them separately. Such a word of caution ought to precede a seriatim analysis.

PICTORIAL FORM

A. ARTISTIC IDEA AND SUBJECT: In choice of subject the painter has much greater freedom than the sculptor. Inanimate nature is moved within the field of his choice; so are complex groupings; so are incidents varied in detail and appeal. All this is beyond the interest and the powers of sculpture in the round; and even sculpture in relief, pictorial in inspiration and technique, falls short of painting.

It is usual to divide painting, according to its choice of subject, into the following classes: (1) landscape, (2) still

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life, (3) genre, (4) historical, (5) portrait, (6) figure. Of these the first gives a fragment of the appearance and life of nature; the second offers, with a frank interest in their *thereness*, a few objects grouped in a simple way—a dish of fruit, swords and armor, a side of beef, game birds and fish, a section of a room. In the others the interest is shifted to the human side of life. Genre painting offers groupings, incidents, actions not as they occur or have occurred, but as they reveal again and again some humanly significant trait or phase or interest in the recurrent and variational drama of human life. The Interiors of de Hooch, *Boys Eating Melons* by Murillo, *The Night Watch* by Rembrandt, *Kermess* by Tenier, *Peasants Dancing* by Breughel the Elder, court life depicted by Watteau and Fragonard, Manet's *Races at Longchamps* and *Music in the Tuilleries*, Renoir's *Piano Lesson* and *A Cup of Chocolate*, and Cézanne's *Card Players* are examples. In historical painting, secular and religious, there is a definite orientation within the stream of life. This thing has occurred at such and such a time and in such and such a place. The Adoration of the Magi, the Marriage at Cana, Christ in the Temple, the Last Supper, the Crucifixion and the Transfiguration were used again and again by the Italian painters; Rubens, Delacroix, Gericault, and Gerard glorified in more or less monumental style court and battle scenes.

Subjects differ in moral, imaginative, emotional, and pictorial value. Millet's *Angelus* has a moral quality which Jordaens' drinking scenes and Manet's *Bon Bock* lack; there is more for the imagination in the mountains or the sea than there is in an eighteenth century garden; a moorland is depressing; a drug fiend arouses disgust; a dance is exhilarating; the pictorial value of a banquet is great because of the opportunity for variegated grouping, effective massing, striking accents in color, splendid detail work.

Painting is in part a representational art, with the visual

aspects of nature for its material. An attempt to do away with subject must remain a questionable step. The impressionist motto "any subject will do" and the reduction of painting to pattern or music by moderns like Russell or Kandinsky mean a distrust of alien interference with the work of the painter. It is easy to lean too heavily on the sentimental, religious, and historical values of an incident, to the neglect of all else. This is a common misreading of pictures. It can best be avoided by passing from the commission given the painter to the subject, from the subject to the *artistic idea* he seeks to express, and from the artistic idea to its realization through paint. An artist is given the task of painting the walls of a church or doing a portrait. In the former case he may be allowed to make his choice from a range of suitable biblical incidents or he may be set a very definite task—Italian church painters were often limited in that way—in the latter case he must paint this or that man. But when we pass beyond the commission we find that the subject interests the painter as subject in so far as it is bound up with some general human value—splendor, grandeur, pathos, tragedy, delicate charm. In this sense the subject even of an historical painting is timeless. The *Pieta* is an eternal tragedy. The transition from subject to artistic idea is through the individual interpretation the painter gives his subject. Even if the whole matter of his technique is set aside, a personal vision remains. Leonardo's *Mona Lisa*, Titian's *Man with the Glove*, Van Dyck's *Charles the First*, Velasquez' *Infantas*, Rembrandt's self-portraits, Whistler's *Carlyle* all show quietly posed bodies and heads, and character expressed in pose, line, and color. It matters little who the originals were or whether they were faithfully represented. All these pictures are personal, sharply individualized visions. The fanatic, twisted spirituality of some of El Greco's figures contrasts with the sweet and shallow complacency of most of Raphael's Madonnas, and the

naïveté of the early Germans. The nude figure as material for painting reveals a personal influence. The muscular massiveness of Michelangelo's nudes is quite as far removed from the animalism, heavy and soft, of those of Rubens as it is from the immature forms chosen by a Boucher or a Fragonard, the decorative modifications of v. Marées or Davies, the full blooded naturalism of Zorn, and the angular figures of Hodler. It is not a question of models. It is true that Rubens in a letter refers to the large, flabby women he was forced to use as models. But there are deeper influences. In none of these men is there an actual copying of the model; in each case the human body as it is painted reflects an artistic idea, and back of that idea there is a personally colored vision, influenced in part by the cultural setting.¹ The difference between subject and artistic idea may be driven home by two illustrations, one from sculpture and one from painting. Mussolini is the subject of a bust by Wildt, but there is hardly a suggestion of likeness there. To the artist Mussolini was a symbol of strength, and in true expressionistic fashion he has built that idea into his medium; he has stretched the lines, broadened the masses and tensed the features with that in view. In El Greco's *Laocoon* the subject is a tragic incident, but it is artistically fashioned along decorative lines.

In a painting in which pictorial form has been achieved subject and artistic idea have a legitimate place, but the subject is not allowed a separate and distracting life, and the artistic idea is reflected in an organized variety of line, mass, color, and light.

B. DESIGN: A picture viewed merely as a framed section of canvas must have unity in the sense of an integration of parts. This unity is called design; and the manner of gaining it, composition.

¹ Hausenstein has shown in an instructive way the personal and cultural mutations in the use of the nude figure.

(1) *Pattern*: The first step toward an understanding of design is to look for a system of relationships which can be enclosed in a simple geometrical figure such as a circle, a triangle, an oblong. These general patterns keep eye and interest from sliding into space. To them may be added the cross, horizontal or tilted, and the diagonal, straight or curved, as main organizing lines in a picture. Examples are: of the circle, Andrea Solario's *Madonna and Child* in the Louvre; of the triangle, Raphael's *Madonna del Prato*; of the oblong, Gainsborough's *A Morning Walk*; of a triangle set on a rectangle, the *Sistine Madonna*; of the half-cross, Hobbema's roads with tall trees; of the diagonal, Rubens's *Descent from the Cross* and many of the slanting designs of Degas.

There is danger in making such general patterns excessively geometrical. A sympathetic study of pictures reveals a great variety of combinations, ranging from an arc above a rectangle, as in del Sarto's *The Last Supper*, to a circle filled with diversely slanting lines, as in Rubens's *The Rape of the Daughters of Leucippus*.

Design is a matter not only of holding the parts of a picture within a general pattern, but of divided spaces and patterned relationships within that scheme. In a figure study there is first of all the question as to how, with reference to the vertical and horizontal limits of the frame, the body is to be posed—straight up and down, in the middle, as in Gainsborough's *Blue Boy*, slightly tilted as in Cézanne's *Peasant*, near the right as in Whistler's portrait of his mother. There are two other problems: how is the figure to be drawn and the space it contains to be filled and articulated? and how is the space surrounding it to be treated? Is that surrounding space to be given as flat surface, contrasted, homogeneous, and either neutral as black or grey, or with the independent, directly pleasing effect of an expanse of gold or silver? Or is it to appear as deep space, in

which the figure is placed or out of which it seems to step? Is it to remain unaccented, as mere unvaried background and is it to be unfilled—without objects of varying depth and cubic individuality? Is this surrounding space, whether flat or deep, decoratively or cubically accented or not, to be independent of the figure and its design? These questions, here as well as in group painting, can be given only this answer: the background is an integral part of the pictorial form and the design; the treatment ought to depend on the form intended and the artistic idea the painter seeks to express. In Renoir there is often a delicately varied decorative elaboration which abolishes the background as such and moves all space within one scheme of color, line, and light. Matisse purposely gives the impression of flat decorative patterning, and shows little interest in deep space. Cézanne does not aim at such effects; either the background is left almost neutral, as in some of his portraits, with the full solidity and weight of his painting thrown into the face or the figure, or it is filled, not decoratively as in Renoir but with part of the plastic meaning of the picture. In the *Bathers* by Cézanne, which Cheney in his *Primer of Modern Art* has for different purposes set by the side of Courbet's *Bathers*, there is no background, properly speaking. Trees and foliage are not a flat pattern, but in light and shade and line they are at one with the nude figures; and this oneness is essential to the meaning of the picture. In Courbet's painting we are conscious of two figures in the foreground and of a photographically rendered receding forest as a setting. The interest is sharply focussed; the design is faulty in its looseness. In Cézanne's *Bathers* there is no setting—man and nature are one. Formally this unification is gained by soft indecisive lines and shadows in the nudes to parallel the broad indecisive masses of foliage. Van Gogh, again, counts on his flaming and linearly agitated backgrounds to convey part of the meaning of his pictures. It

follows from all this that extreme caution is necessary in appraisals of paintings. If moderns like Matisse, Soutine, Pechstein, Marc, and Walt Kuhn seem to deal arbitrarily with deep space and awkwardly with perspective, they must not be condemned hastily; their purpose must be looked for and tested in terms of an original and satisfying design.

When we pass from backgrounds to the total space occupied by the objects rendered we discover various orderly sub-divisions and patterns. One of the commonest is a triple arrangement—a central mass flanked on either side. In Titian's *Assumption* there is the unusual integration of three levels.² In Leonardo's *Last Supper* the *three-motif* is indicated in the three windows and is carried over into the grouping by threes of what would otherwise have been an uninteresting extension. In *The Virgin and St. Anne* by Quentin Matsys there are three arches and at the lower part of each arch two figures whose heads cut into the space of light to about the same height. Often architectural effects are used in such patterning of space.

Space-patterning may be followed into other details of a picture. Recurrent lines or patches, ratios of division similar to those in architecture, rhythmic units of light and color, lines continuous, linked or abruptly broken—all this may be taken as part of the design. It is better, however, to take pattern as a general compositional arrangement, and to discuss separately certain organizational features as part of the design and as ultimately factors in the pictorial form.

(2) *Relationships of Line and of Mass:* A study of paintings reveals a relational use of lines little short of infinite variety. Long or short, horizontal, diagonal or vertical, broad or thin, straight or curved, single or massed lines help to carry and express the painter's meaning. Their value lies far beyond the mere building up of an object and the marking of its contours. In their own right,

² Cf. the analysis in Barnes, *The Art in Painting*.

and in their tranquil or sweeping interrelationships they serve to give motor, decorative, emotional, and dynamic value and individuality to a picture. They may be organized into sequences—a curve or a short broken line may appear with an intriguing orderliness in the different parts of a painting.

Sequence may also be found in masses. What has been called measure harmony is either simple repetition of a space in its bulk or the carrying of a ratio through masses of different sizes.

(3) *Relationships of Color*: It is well to recall certain things about color. The fact that we speak of *sky blue*, *sea green*, *flesh color* shows that we think of color in relation to the natural appearance of objects to the eye. Some colors we find more pleasing than others. We distinguish and respond differently to the various shades and hues of a color. Adjectives like *gay*, *bright*, *heavy*, *warm*, *cool* are applied to colors. We know that colors when set side by side modify each other. We speak of contrasts and harmonies; and find certain combinations pleasing, others jarring.

All this is of importance in the study of painting in so far as an attempt is made to read the colors of a picture in their organizational unity—in their relation to the pictorial form. In modern painting especially color rather than line is what defines and gives unity to a picture. Little is gained by taking the marvelous light blue of Renoir's *A Cup of Chocolate* or the patches of deeper blue in his landscapes, the subdued and mellow browns and yellows of Rembrandt, the reddish yellow and bright green of Kisling, and the dark and dull greens of Rousseau *le douanier* or the reddish flesh color of Renoir's last period and to respond to them in isolation. Nor will simple matching of them with adjoining colors mean much. Painters choose colors neither arbitrarily nor in the spirit of the interior decorator. Rembrandt, Renoir, Soutine, Kisling, Kandinsky, Pascin have

their own individual color ranges. This is not because they could not paint others or combine in a different way—what it means is that these colors thus combined seemed to them the best means to what they wished to express. A black and white copy of Renoir is blotchy and thoroughly unsatisfying; the larger part of the meaning has escaped. To show how intimately color expresses what a painting really is, the simple experiment of transposing may be used. Copy Soutine's pictures but put blues and whites in the place of the reds and deep yellows, and most of the wild vigor has disappeared. Put a color closer to flesh values on Kisling's nudes or transpose Picasso's emaciated *Man in Blue* to any other color or even to a different shade of blue, and the painter would at once disavow the new picture, not as necessarily less pleasing but as utterly alien to his meaning. Every color then is to be studied in relation not only to its neighbors, as harmonizing or contrasting, but to the pictorial form and its details. There may be a design of many contrasts, phrases, accents, and sequences of color or there may be a delicately graded tonal scheme of one or two colors. It is to be regarded, too, in its plastic and structural use; in the way it may be made to catch and hold light; in its relation to balance and to rhythm; and as it affects and is affected by texture.

(4) *Light and Shade*: The picture nature offers is of objects in color set at varying distances and angles from the eye. The colors themselves are of lighter and darker shades; and the surfaces absorb and reflect light in different degrees. Seldom is the illumination uniform over a surface of even small size—there are high lights and shadows. Outdoors it is relative also to the time of the day and the season. With diminished light, color disappears, and what remains is a mass of greys and blacks.

The painter in his work has at his disposal white and black with their scale of greyish mixtures; or he may render

the effects of light and shadow by mixing either white or black or grey with any of the colors, or color with color—striking, for example, the high note of orange in a reddish brown scheme. His means are much simpler than those of nature, and his range of effects, narrower. He may in a landscape seek to retain the ratios of nature, keeping, at least, the accent and measure in the contrasted surfaces of a tree that is partly in light and partly in shade when he cannot duplicate the full intensity of either, and giving their proper values to objects differently set and related in deep space. Or he may disregard these ratios altogether and strike out boldly for an original design, quite remote from what nature offers in graded and contrasted effects.

The neutral scale—white, grey, and black—is not used much by modern painters. Such neutrality has been taken away even from backgrounds of portraits. It was the impressionists who saw color in shadows; it was Renoir and Cézanne who in different ways used patches of dark and light color to give solidity, variety, and rhythmic integrity to their compositions.

There are many technical uses of light in a picture. In an interior light may be shown as striking objects from one point, a candle or a lamp, and the aim may be to give the reflections on the walls, the objects with their edges and spots of light and the deepening shadows about. Or there may be an even, diffused light, revealing only the natural accents of the various things in the room. There may be a culminating point of light, not necessarily in the centre of the picture, with a tonal scheme of gradually darkened color. Delicacy of light may be aimed at, as in Corot, or the contrast between high light and depth of shadow, as in Rembrandt. It is hardly the task of aesthetics to go into the detail of these many uses; it is the duty of an appreciative critic of any painter to study carefully the peculiar light and shade effects in his work—to see whether he sets

a light patch next to a dark one or puts a transitional value between; to what extent he is responsive to the density of the atmosphere and its effect on surfaces; in what ways he uses light structurally, plastically, and rhythmically. But it is the task of the aesthetician to discover whether the lights and shadows in a picture have a patterned relation to the design, and whether they, like everything else, contribute to the pictorial form. Whether or not the colors are true to nature is unimportant; what really matters is the aim of the artist and the form he has selected and created.

(5) *Texture*: When woven stuffs are compared in point of texture, they are spoken of as rough or smooth, compact or loose, hard or soft, glossy or dull, thin or heavy in effect. All this may with only a slight stretching of words be applied to painting, for, at least, a part of the aesthetic meaning of a picture is to be found in texture.

Roughness may be gained mechanically by the thick, irregular use of spots or ridges of paint; smoothness, by an even thickness spread over the picture. The pointillists, Van Gogh, and painters like Prendergast or Soutine use the former method; Raphael is a good example of the second. Only a simple use of large color areas makes possible the latter; any aim at complex effects, any painting of one bit of color over another, interferes with evenness of surface. But smoothness or roughness is not a matter merely of what you get by running your hand over a picture. Color may be evenly applied, and yet the impression may be of roughness. In such cases the impression is given partly by abruptness and shortness in the brushwork, partly by bold contrasts in color and sharp temporary halts in the linear patterns. In this sense much of the work of Matisse, decoratively flat from the point of view of perspective, is rough in texture. Flowing brushwork and fluency of color and line, on the contrary, suggest smoothness.

Compactness and looseness may be caught in the contrast

between the earlier and later Manet or Renoir. It is easy to see in a picture, less easy to explain. A Chardin still life is neat, persuasively complete in color and drawing, firm and compact in texture. A still life by Cézanne shows greater freedom in the handling of paint, strong contrasts, and a less obvious togetherness. Flesh as Rubens and Renoir came to paint it was not the tightly drawn uniform surface it was in some of the early Italian and German painting, nor yet a tinted, non-porous thing like porcelain; rather was it suffused with light, individualized through lights and shades, and made arresting, intriguing, and living by varied coloring. The difference between a Van Eyck or a Holbein and a Rembrandt—an Utrillo and a Monet or Seurat—a David or a Marie Laurencin is between a knot tightly or loosely drawn. In the second of each pair of artists the form is there, but it is not pulled tight; if there is detail, it does not function neatly and sharply—there is a loose, swinging technique.

Hardness or softness may be gained in many ways. Sharp lines, clear-cut detail, large areas of certain uniform colors or of unrelieved blacks or greys make a picture hard. Delicately drawn, finely varied, wavering, rhythmically related lines, tonal arrangements of color, and shimmering luminosities give the impression of softness. Holbein, Courbet, Leibl, Rousseau *le douanier*, Picasso, and Kisling are hard; Corot, Monet, Whistler, and Renoir are soft.

Allowance must be made in any reference to glossiness and dulness to the finish of the surface, and also to whether time has either softened or destroyed in part an original brilliancy of coloring. Pigments, oils and other binding materials, and varnish differ greatly in their effect on the maturing or weathering of a picture. But after allowance has been made for this mechanical influence, there is an intentional shininess or dulness of surface to be reckoned with.

A picture may seem thin, flat or thick, heavy, with body to it. The mural painting of Puvis de Chavannes is thin and flat, so is the *Man in Blue* by Picasso. Certain shades—light blue or yellow—favor flatness; so do large, uniform masses of color. Wherever color is broken up, or light, or line; wherever there is bold, emphatic brushwork and structural use of perspective, there a picture has substance and depth.

(6) *Balance*: Balanced arrangement in a picture is a matter of equivalence of parts. The equivalence may be horizontal, diagonal, or vertical; it may be kinetic—weight and pull—or one of interest arrested, held, satisfied. Lateral balance is the simplest; there the idea of a stick and a fulcrum can be easily applied. The obvious arrangement would be to have the fulcrum in the middle, with equal weight on either side. Simple as it is, it is avoided by painters. If they give a figure study, they move the figure slightly to the right or left; and they get an intriguing variety by using vertical and diagonal equivalence as well. Suppose a picture is cut horizontally in strips an inch wide. For every strip the fulcrum would be differently placed. This would hold also of vertical and horizontal strips. Paste four or five of these strips together, and the question of balance becomes a complicated one.

Filled space has more weight than unfilled space; and certain colors are weightier than others. A painter gives a lateral view of a man seated. To put the axis of the upper part of his body in the middle of the picture would result in poor balance: the lines of the chair and the horizontals of his thighs and the greater mass of color would weigh down the right or left. This must be allowed for by shifting the figure to one side. Again, unless there is some compensating touch of color in the upper half of the picture, there would be too little weight there for a satisfactory balance.

Lines have kinetic value, and this value enters into the problem of balance. A picture with many parallel lines all strongly slanted must, if it is to satisfy as design, offer something to counterbalance their leaning and thrust. But painting shows less strongly kinetic balance than architecture or sculpture. Colors and lines, as they fill space and subdivide it, appeal to *interest*; their meaning is not one merely of movement and force and a balanced kinetic scheme. This interest is one of stress and arrested attention. What holds us may be either some striking detail of color or line, some accent in the artist's work, or something psychic. Thus a very small patch of bright color may balance a large expanse of color less bright. The small oval of a face balances because of its psychic appeal the larger but less arresting and significant area of a cloak or dress. In poor painting there is often a lack of correlation between these two sources and types of interest—one or the other may easily be so handled as to yield nothing of value. A good painter skilfully combines them. In one of Pascin's pictures there is to the left the figure of a small boy—an object of direct psychic appeal, charmingly drawn, slight, delicate and soft in color; on the right there is decorative compensation in a palette-like splash of many colors.

(7) *Rhythm*: Rhythm in painting is variational orderliness felt as movement. It involves (1) *recurring accents and stresses of line, mass, color, and light and shade*; (2) *suggestion of movement*; (3) *fluency of design*.

Painting has been called a space art and as such has been held to be limited to the rendering of objects coexisting in space at one moment of time. Such a theory, if held to too closely, may lead to serious errors. It overlooks the time element in the appreciation of a painting, and it fails to see that the painter can by various devices render on his canvas two or more successive moments.

We do not rest satisfied with the first general impression a picture gives as a whole. Our eyes travel from one part to another, they explore and relate. Our interest shifts and stresses. There is a time element in this organizational response through which we make a picture our own. The painter may boldly step beyond the limit set him, as Watteau does when he gives successive moments in the procession of life, or he may choose a pictorial form and pattern design which enlist strongly our relating and supplementing activities, perceptual, motor, and imaginative, with the result that space turns to movement. This is the use of rhythm in painting. Rhythm naturally suggests music or poetry —arts which give it directly and depend on it strongly for many of their effects. But it may be made use of by the architect in the variational orderliness of his marching patterns, by the sculptor in the interrelationships and projections and fallings away of his lines and masses, and by the painter.

(1) One of the sources of rhythmic quality in paintings is a recurrent stress of line or color, comparable to the repeated ins and outs of a pattern. The accent may be one of size or of brightness or of shape or of interested appeal. There is a strong triple rhythm in Leonardo's *The Last Supper*. In Caravaggio's *The Entombment* there is a group of five men and women, two of whom support the limp body of Christ. The general pattern is an arc beginning at the upper left of the picture and pulling the interest down irresistibly to the head of Christ. The six ovals show an orderly difference of slant and of the following patterned arrangement: single, double, double, single.

(2) A second source of rhythm is strongly suggested movement, quick or slow, slight or forceful, striking or subdued. Here rhythm may easily come in conflict with balance. There is an unbalanced rhythmic movement to the right in Guido Reni's *Aurora*. The pull upward in Hod-

ler's group *Concord* is very strong; Hobbema's tree-lined roads, quite as uncompromising in their use of verticals, give a quieter and slighter movement. Rhythm may be gained by a gradual lessening of shades or by the hardly noticeable movement from white to black or from light to dark color through all the values of greys and tints, or shades of the color.

(3) A third source of rhythm is fluency of design, gained by an *interflow* and *interglow* of parts. An object or any part of the sensuous image of that object is robbed of its static individuality and independence, and is distorted, if necessary, in order to give the impression of a fluctuant scheme of color and mass. Distortion of this sort is most violent in painters like Marc, Kokoschka, and Soutine, whose pictures illustrate rhythm of the second and third types. Other, less extreme examples are El Greco's *Laocoon*, Cézanne's *Bathers* and many of Renoir's paintings. Rhythmic fluency as it modifies natural forms in Renoir's *Bathers* has been well analyzed by Barnes in *The Art in Painting*. One of the largest of the Renoir canvases in the Barnes Foundation Collection, *La Promenade*, is a brilliant example of how light and shade may be made to carry rhythms throughout a picture, and soften and etherealize the hard and unattractive fashion in dress of the nineties.

C. PERSONAL VISION AND ECSTASY: Painting, we have seen, is not merely a matter of subject and technical detail. It is personal throughout. Back of the subject is the artistic idea, which is a personal vision, and which, in its embodiment in the pictorial form, affects the execution at all points, through all the detail of the design.

What we are concerned with here is the recognition of this personal element as it appears vitally in the pictorial form.

Vision and *ecstasy* are terms applicable most directly to poetry. It is in the appreciation of poetry that they are best explained. Here they may be sketchily marked as a

sharp and individual way of seeing, interpreting, and rendering through paint; and a heightened emotional and imaginative responsiveness, personal, intense, and resonant, which finds expression in the work of the artist and appeals through its embodiment to the imagination and the feelings of the onlooker.

Unfortunately there is a less liberal attitude towards the personal in painting than there is in poetry. It is considered the less subjective art. Individual variations in technique are accepted and studied, but highly individual interpretations in the large and renderings are either ignored or distrusted. A large measure of this distrust may be traced back to the idea that painting ought to copy accurately natural appearances or to improve on them in socially acceptable standardized ways. But why should the painter not be himself—project his personally colored vision and be carried on its crest to ecstatic rendering? If he can make himself worthwhile in giving body to his vision and can give and evoke a vibrational quality of feeling—what else can be asked of him? Good poetry need not be of one pattern or of one voice or of one mind. Good painting ought not to be forced into one formula. Let the painter be honest and as aggressively personal as he need be, let his work be regarded sympathetically and critically. If he has little to express, he will soon find his level as a faddist; if he has created new imaginative and emotional designs and values, he ought to be welcomed in the realm of an art which has room for many eyes, many minds, and many methods.

POETRY

All definitions of poetry suffer from one or the other of two vices: either they are very simple—like Wordsworth's "emotion remembered in tranquillity"—and then they fall short of an art which is various in its types and structures, various also in its appeal and its music, and subtle in its shaping; or they seek to give in compact form the complex meaning of poetry, and then they seem stiff and indecisive, for there is still the problem of how much stress is to be put on each of the several qualities.

Of these two vices I shall avoid the first. At the risk of a pedantic and congested use of words I offer this formula:—*Poetry, in an enraptured, visional spirit and within a metrically ordered, articulated, and rounded scheme, conveys images, moods, and ideas by means of language that is rhythmical and musical, decoratively patterned, vivid, vibrant, and revelational.* All that can be claimed for it is that it is a starting place; it carries in convenient form what to me are the essentials of poetry. What is meant by them and how they are related must be left to further analysis.

THE MEDIUM

The medium of poetry is language. Whatever else he may be, a poet is first of all a worker in words. But so is the prose writer; so is he who makes use of living, meaningful speech. Words singly or in combination are symbols of meanings. They represent man's world as he itemizes its appearances; as he reflects on it and responds to it emotionally. Much of this world he shares with his fellows as

an experience or as a matter of give and take; he is in need, therefore, of the standardized currency of common speech. Through language he becomes articulate and communicative. Of this commonly used language it may be said that it is a makeshift standardizing; it is largely arbitrary in its symbolism; and it is pointed at the practical. It is makeshift in the sense that a word may blanket experiences which must, as from man to man, be different and may serve as a superficial marker for many dissimilar objects and images. Thus *love* means many things to many persons; and *river* might be visualized in any one of many ways. The symbolism is arbitrary, for words are not intrinsically related to what they stand for. To this there are exceptions. Words like *hum*, *buzz*, *murmuring*, *swish*, *bubble* are a vocal evocation of sounds; *river*, *flumen*, *fleuve* give directly the slow flowing of the river in a way in which *potamos* or the short, sharp *Fluss* does not. *Gebirge* has about it an architectural appropriateness which *mountains* with its falling rhythm lacks.¹ There are emotional evocations in words like *melancholy*, *merriment*, *thrilled*, *monotone*. Some words are harsh and hard; others soft and insinuating; some are sharp and quick, others, slow and expansive. Again, language becomes more practical-minded as it becomes efficient in labelling and recording. The mark left by picture-thought has grown dim. Gone are the warmth and color from common speech; with the exception of its imaginative slang and forceful profanity, it is drab, abstractly discursive—a cold saving logic or a wasteful inartistic use of words.

The consciously creative, artistic impulse seizes upon language as it seizes upon marble, color, and sound, and reshapes it to artistic prose. Vividness is sought in the words; balance, in sentence-structure; variety, in rhythmic sequences; a personal and imaginative touch, in the phrasing.

¹ Whoever is tempted to take such analogies too seriously ought to read Aldous Huxley's burlesque remarks on the Etruscan language.

We are no longer to look through language as we might through a window pane; we are to become arrestingly conscious of a beauty and worthwhileness in the medium itself.

Poetry is a further step in such reshaping. It weaves a rhythmic magic of words. But there is more to it than this. In poetry the world is sensuously embodied in a slighter degree than in painting. Beyond the tone-color and music of words is something else to be reached and to be made vivid and unforgettable. To get more than a faint euphony from the word *daffodil* we must pass from the arbitrary symbol to a memory image of the flower—we must imaginatively recapture an experience. This is what the poet is constantly doing. Imparting to his medium new values of music and word magic, he uses it in this sense also: of projecting through it feelings caught in their fleetingness, and personally colored ideas and visual images. Not only does each poet have a form and music of his own; he also has a world of his own which he builds into his verse, using words as symbols. To see rippling waves under the image of laughter; to speak of *the still-closing waters*; or of music *climbing the long grey stairways of the sky* or of night as *star-shouldered* means more than the coining of unforgettable phrases or, as the literal-minded would have it, an imaginative mauling of language. These phrases, of the Greek, the Elizabethan, the Imagist, the ultra-modern, one and all are bold intermittent flashes of an inner vision of a world individually built, enriched for the eye, and emotionally deepened.

There is a great contrast between what these words—*cloud*, *West Wind*, *skylark*, *autumn*, *sea*—mean to any imaginative individual and what they are to a Shelley, a Wordsworth, a Verlaine, a Swinburne—in imagery, rhythm, and mood. What a picture spray there is in Shelley's *To a Skylark*; how the melancholy of autumn is voiced in the very music of Verlaine's *Chanson d'Automne*; and how the

tumultuous and encroaching life of the sea is caught in Swinburne's lines

Inland still at her own wild will swells, rolls, and revels the
surging sea.

Even to what in nature is fixed in form and assertive in color—birds, trees, flowers, stars—the poet responds in an intensely personal and inspirational way. Of this striking examples are Wheelock's *The Fish-Hawk*, Aldington's *The Poplar*, Sara Teasdale's *The Tree and Stars*, Oppenheim's *Lilac Magic*.

Here lies the aesthetic meaning of poetry: in this vivid projection of what might be called a soul's intimate vision and supreme venture in words evocative and revelational. The revelation differs in the three great types of poetry. The lyric—its very name suggestive of song—reveals in emotionally vibrant language a mood, a caprice, a vision. The epic, with a personal touch and in a welcoming, other-minded spirit, unfolds a world of characters and events. The drama lives sympathetically within the will and heart of men and women, gives their inner life, and offers a personal reading of its clashes, feelings, and meanings. But whatever the type, we are lovers of poetry only in so far as we can share in the vision as well as become attuned to the music and sensitive to the magic of words.

THE ELEMENTS OF AESTHETIC EFFECT

THE STRUCTURAL SCHEME

Looked upon merely as printed, a poem is a succession, short or long, continuous or interrupted, of lines sent off in the more conventional forms with capitals and stepping part way across the page with some regularity of length or patterned alteration. The sequence is all but continuous in the epic; it is cut into dialogue in the drama; there is a

grouping by stanzas in the lyric. In the less conventional forms the capitals are dropped; vertically there is still a blocking of print, suggestive or not of the stanza, and horizontally there seems to be a ranging of print arbitrary in its wide swinging stride or short halted step.

As soon as the poem is read a new articulated structure is revealed. The lines appear metrical with controlled sequences of long and short or accented and unaccented syllables; there are pauses and rhythmic onsets, cadences, phrase-units and patterns, and often rhymes.

Still another structural unity is the inner one of content—of the meanings sensuously embodied in a poem. It is then a question of how image follows image, of how moods and ideas are unfolded and transformed—of how the inner life finds a sharply varied, well modulated form.

Of these three types of structural organization the first is of little importance. Examples of the second are the Greek choric ode with its measured correspondences, the sonnet, intricate in its rhyme-form, the triolet, and the rondeau. There are many possible schemes which allow the craftsman to create delicate or involved patterns of form. Natural affinities and tradition connect certain verse-forms with certain types of content. There are "heroic" and "elegiac" measures; the ode and the sonnet demand solemn, lofty ideas and images; the triolet is a slight thing that trips lightly to lilting music. It is dangerous to disregard such associations. Edna St. Vincent Millay in her Fifth Sonnet fills a solemn verse-form with commonplace imagery and language, thus giving to an idea instinct with tragedy a satiric turn, which is uncongenial to the spirit of the sonnet. Translators are often infelicitous in their choices. Sappho has been mistranslated again and again. Put into a religiously tinged idiom, set to the weighty rolling organ music of triple rhymes and other hymnal patterning, the charm, the lightness, the sharply edged pictures, and

the direct passionateness that mark her poetry are sacrificed.

Structural organization is present not only in its verbal and rhythmic scheme but in its spiritual content. It is then a matter of how the artistic idea is made articulate in a sequence of images expressive of a mood present in every part of a poem, as in Verlaine's *Sagesse* or in Swinburne's *A Forsaken Garden* or a mood sequence, as in a chain of sonnets or in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*. Goethe's *Ueber allen Gipfeln* fuses eight simple lines to a harmony of image and mood. Other poems perfect in this inner organization are *Autumn* and *Ode to a Grecian Urn* by Keats; *Fragmentary Blue* by Frost; *Pear Tree* by H. D.; *Sea Slant* by Sandburg. But Sandburg fails in the poem *Bones*

Sling me under the sea.
 Pack me down in the salt and wet.
 No farmer's plow shall touch my bones.
 No Hamlet hold my jaws and speak
 How jokes are gone and empty is my mouth.
 Long green-eyed scavengers shall pick my eyes,
 Purple fish play hide-and-seek,
 And I shall be song of thunder, crash of sea,
 Down on the floors of salt and wet.
 Sling me . . . under the sea.

A fine poem is marred by two disturbing notes: the allusion to Hamlet, with its stark literariness, and the literary imagery near the end. Sandburg has called the past a bucket of ashes; but here he has taken from those ashes a few bits of shiny glass and has packed them incongruously in the strong salt wet spirit of his poem.

METRE, RHYTHM, MUSIC

The metrical unit is a foot: a succession in ancient poetry of long and short, in modern poetry of accented and unac-

cented syllables. Of feet the most commonly used are the iambus $\cup -$, the trochee $- \cup$, the dactyl $- \cup \cup$, and the anapest $\cup \cup -$. A metrical line is formed either by the simple repetition of one of these measures, as in blank verse, or by such repetition with a change at the end, as in the hexameter, or by a combination of measures; and if great complexity is desired by a mixing in of such unusual units as $--$, $- \cup -$ or $\cup \cup \cup$. But verse is not a matter of the metronome; only the poorest writing or reading of it can make of it something utterly mechanical. It shows its life in the irregular sliding back and forth of the caesura, or break, in the verse; the running of one verse into the next; the varying length of line; its modulated pauses and stresses; its rhythmic breathing. Interest, which plays an important part in pictorial balance, is not to be neglected in poetry. The lingering feel of a word or the tasting of its meaning may add time or stress and redeem what seems a mechanical fault or slip in the verse. The fact that our metrical unit is one of stress, and not of quantity, makes it difficult to reduce either the rhythm or the music to a succession of beats. For affecting the metrical scheme at every point are natural and interested variations.

The rhythm of a poem depends partly on the metrical unit used, partly on metrical patterning, and partly on the swaying modulation, free and disciplined, which is the life of the verse.

Different units have a different motor *feel*. The iambus differs as sharply from the trochee as going upstairs differs from going down. The dactyl has about it a light running and rippling quality; the anapest is a long swinging stride. The number of times a unit is repeated in a line affects its rhythmic character. Thus the iambic tetrameter used in Greek tragedy is more stately, less flexible and decisive in movement than the pentameter. Few poets rival Aristophanes in complexity and subtlety of versification, and in

the delicate sense of what is suited to movement and mood. The appearance of short broken lines within blank verse of regular length, as in Shakespeare's later diction, not only reflects the excitement of a *Lear* or an *Othello* but gives to the verse itself an occasional staccato note of passion. Variations are gained by the varying appearance of other feet in a line or strophe. A dactyl in a trochaic line is like a flurry of movement in the even tread of a marching song. The greatest variety of measures and rhythms is to be found in lyrics; it is needed there to express changing moods—slow and accelerated psychic rhythms—and the play of a roving and flashing imagination. Of such variety the first two stanzas of Shelley's *Night* are an illustration.

Swiftly walk over the western wave,
 Spirit of Night!
 Out of the misty eastern cave,—
 Where, all the long and lone daylight,
 Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear
 Which make thee terrible and dear.—
 Swift be thy flight!
 Wrap thy form in a mantle grey,
 Star-inwrought!
 Bind with thine hair the eyes of Day;
 Kiss her until she be wearied out.
 Then wander o'er city and sea and land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought.

The sharp decisiveness of

Wrap thy form in a mantle grey
 contrasts with the slow wandering rhythm of

Then wander o'er city and sea and land

Of the four short lines the first two correspond; their rhythmic scheme is — ○ ○ —; that of the third is — ○ —;

the fourth, — — —, presents three words of equal psychic weight, and a slow amplitude of feeling.

An unintelligent reading would make of the first line of Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*

O wild West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being

a regular iambic line, but it ought to be read — — — — ◡ — ◡ — ◡ — ◡. The four successive longs set the impressive theme.

To what point can rhythmic complexity and irregularity be carried? Experimentalists have carried it to the extreme of *free verse*; they hold that the traditional forms of poetry fail to use all but a few of the rhythms of speech; that these few forms have become mechanized in the using; that there is need of new music. Their opponents see in *free verse* little else than prose printed in segments to catch the eye; and find it as unmusical as the "rough scratching of a pencil on slate." It may be granted that much of it is nothing but bad prose; but so is some of the older poetry nothing but the chop-chop of a cleaver mincing meat. *Free verse* at its best does not lack music, but it is not a facile music easily caught. Nor is modern verse so revolutionary as it seems. Greek prosody, after all, by admitting *resolution*, with restrictions which the grammarians noted and overstressed, allowed very free rhythmic variations. A line like ◡ — ◡ | ◡◡◡ | ◡◡◡ | ◡◡◡ | ◡◡◡ | —, gained by resolving a long into two shorts, must remain rhythmically strange; and unlike a trochaic line. The choric odes of the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus show complex patterning. In both the recitative of the *Prometheus* and the long opening chorus of the *Agamemnon* there is a free use of short broken lines, and a natural varying music. Of this free type is the *Prometheus* monologue of Goethe. So are the *Dionysus Dithyrambs* of Nietzsche. If music and the rhythmic

spirit are allowed there, how can they be denied to Amy Lowell's *Patterns*; to Lola Ridge's *Reveille*; to the delicate and intense phrase units of Toller's *Schwalbenbuch* and *Masse Mensch*; and to lines like Sandburg's

Stormy, husky, brawling,
City of the Big Shoulders

or again

One they killed.
One lives on;
Cross, thorns, head, against the moon.
Nails was their answer,
Nails,
Nails.

The musical quality of a poem is not a matter merely of a metrical scheme, and of rhythmic accent and movement. There are peculiar tonal qualities in vowels, vowel-combinations; in consonants and in single words. Here are three words: *thrill*, *throb*, *thrum*. Their vowels slip down the scale; the final consonants have a persistency of sound and length which a final *t* could never give. The initial *th* has a vibrancy which is utterly lacking in words like *shrill* and *scum*. The *i* and the *u* are as different as the violin and the bass viol. Single words are soft or harsh, quavering or full-toned, intense or soothing. Vowel sequence, assonance, alliteration, the way words are put together—all have their share in the expressive music of verse. Here is illustrative material from Keats

O soothest sleep!

from *To Autumn*

Thy hair soft-lifted by the winnowing wind;
Or on a half-reap'd furrow sound asleep,

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Drowsed with the fume of poppies, while thy hook
Spares the next swath and all its twined flowers;

from *Last Sonnet*

Of snow upon the mountains and the moors

.
.

To feel for ever its soft fall and swell,
Awake for ever in a sweet unrest,
Still, still to hear her tender-taken breath,
And so live ever—or else swoon to death.

There is a delicately varied vowel-music in all these lines. An example are the weight and volume of *swoon* as it appears suddenly in a sequence of *i*'s and *e*'s.

THE MAGIC OF WORDS

The music that is gained, not from rhythm, but from such combining of words is only a special instance of a magic practised by every real poet: the *magic of words*. Even the writer of artistically shaped prose has something of this art. He puts the right word in the right place; intent as he is on the meaning of what he writes he does not neglect the manner; he knows when to be decorative, direct and vigorous, persuasively smooth or harsh. Far beyond him in a feeling for word-values and word-power is the poet. He has the magician's gift of doing with words what no one else can do. He makes them sparkle, flash with a living fire, darken with emotion or become translucent. He turns language into something beautiful, supremely expressive, haunting and unforgettable.

Here are a few examples of this magic of words; set down to be studied in their variety of devices and effects:

Sappho

And I flutter like a child after her mother.

I love delicacy, and for me love has the sun's splendor
and beauty.

Over the fisherman Pelagon his father Meniscus set
wicker-net and basket, memorial of a luckless
life.

Shakespeare *Sonnets*

And Summer's lease hath all too short a date:

When to the Sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,
Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow,
For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
And weep afresh love's long-since-cancell'd woe,
And moan th' expense of many a vanish'd sight:

. . . proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim

Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made.

That time of year thou may'st in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold—
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.

Austin Dobson *A Garden Song*

Here in this sequester'd close
Bloom the hyacinth and rose,
Here beside the modest stock
Flaunts the flaring hollyhock.

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Stephen Vincent Benét *King David*.

Her body shimmered, tender and white
As the flesh of lilies in candlelight.

.

John Hall Wheelock *Nirvana*

I have forgotten you, long, long ago;
Like the sweet silver singing of thin bells
Vanished, or music fading faint and low.
Sleep on, I lie at heaven's high oriels,
Who loved you so.

.

Carl Sandburg

I came sudden, at the city's edge,
On a blue burst of lake,
Long lake waves breaking under the sun
On a spray-flung curve of shore;
And a fluttering storm of gulls,
Masses of great gray wings
And flying white bellies
Veering and wheeling free in the open.

.

The magician's conjuring ways are many; and it is well to follow him into some of the ways of his magic.

FELICITY AND FINALITY OF PHRASE: These lines offer many instances of felicitous phrasing: *trim* is just the word to go with *proud-pied April*; *death's dateless night* and *love's long-since-cancell'd woe* show imaginative range and intensity gained through verbal condensation. *Flaunts the flaring hollyhock* is the perfect rendering of a vivid isolated impression; *memorial of a luckless life* is a brief epic of the sea; *blue burst of lake* and *spray-flung curve of shore* by their boldness and force move familiar objects within the circle of truth and distinction.

As for finality, that is the mark of all great art. We rest in it—we are not tempted to go beyond. When we do seem to go beyond, as in tragedy, with its cosmic riddles, it is the spirit of art that urges us and sustains us, and still holds us within its confines. Nothing in the magic art of the poet is simpler and more illusive than finality of phrase. Shelley gives an image of night *in a mantle grey, Star-in-wrought!* Never have I seen her that way, but Shelley forces me to remain spell-bound within his image; I find sustenance and rest there. Another poet sees her differently; she is *Star-shouldered*; to Helton

The night is nailed aloft with gold . . .

Again I welcome and become the sharer in what is offered. Finality in a scientific view of the night and the stars would mean a set of ideas: artistic finality means the satisfied acceptance of numberless images creatively projected and vividly made part of my imaginative life. What a stretch is demanded if we are to see with Shakespeare wintry trees as *bare ruin'd choirs*, but how consummately possessive the picture and the phrase become when their meaning is reached! We are held; and are thrilled and supremely content in the holding.

DECORATIVE PATTERNING: The order and arrangement of words in a verse differ widely from the order natural to prose. There are inversions like *bloom the hyacinth and rose*; alliteration like *sweet silver singing*; there is assonance; there are balanced arrangements like *sweet deaths—sweetest odours*. Much of this rearrangement is rhythmic, and some of it is for musical effect. A large part of it may be called decorative patterning. The line

When yellow leaves, or none or few, do hang

lacks natural directness and logic but offers a pleasing pattern of words. Shelley's line

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Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red

has an interlocked sequence of colors, within which the *and's* are cradled. In Swinburne's *Itylus* there is decorative variation in the line

Sister, my sister, fleet sweet swallow

and there is in the first lines of all but two of the stanzas, in the adjectives applied to the swallow—*fair swift; fleet swift; soft light; singing; fleeting; shifting, rapid*—not merely a picture painted in successive touches but word patterning that is subtly reminiscent and ever new. Even Sandburg, who is as remote as can be from the intricate word embroidery of a Keats or a Swinburne uses decorative patterning in poems like *Sea Slant* and *Slabs of the Sunburnt west*. He strikes again and again the same phrase-note at the beginning of lines; he plays such variants as

A bluejay blue
and a gray mouse gray

and

Into the night, into the blanket of night,
Into the night rain gods, the night luck gods,
Overland goes the overland passenger train

FIGURES AND IMAGERY: In every Rhetoric there is much space given to figures of speech:—apostrophe, asyndeton, hyperbole, metaphor, simile, and the rest. All these are part of the mechanics of poetry; and they all, in their several ways, reflect its spirit and deeper life. Apostrophe and hyperbole both reveal emotional intensification, and the former serves lyrical projection as well; asyndeton favors vigor and swiftness. Simile and metaphor deserve a place apart, for they are closest to picture thought, and to the imaginatively reshaped and revalued experiences which are the stuff and form of poetry.

The simile is a transference in the sense that the poet in picturing or describing something calls to his aid another image or set of images. The uses and types of such transference are many.

Sappho in the lines of a marriage song

Raise high the roof-beams, carpenters. Like Ares comes the bridegroom taller far than a tall man.

wishes to give a vivid impression of the height of the bridegroom, compares him to Ares, and then, lest the irrelevant and too fantastic mar the picture turns back to the tallness of a very tall man.

In Browning's

And her eyes are dark and humid, like the depth on depth of lustre
Hid i' the harebell

mere vividness is not aimed at; the image gained from the transference is elaborated; the value is for the moment shifted to it. This is true also of Shelley's four similes in *To a Skylark*: *glow-worm golden, rose embowered* add nothing to the vividness of an imaged bird; they are given a rich poetic life of their own.

Different again are the long descriptive similes used by Homer, Virgil, Dante, and Milton. There, too, the value is in the second image, but the image is chosen because it is naturally and vividly expressive of the first.

The finest type of simile is the one of which the second stanza of Meredith's *Love in the Valley* is an example. Speaking of his love he calls her

Shy as the squirrel and wayward as the swallow

and, elaborating on these two images, has them sparkle and glint with a brilliancy that adds lustre and gives defining light to both.

In the closing lines of Andrew Lang's poem *The Odyssey*

They hear like Ocean on a western beach
The surge and thunder of the Odyssey

there is a transition from simile to metaphor. Calling a metaphor a condensed simile has the authority of Aristotle. The example he gives—*like a lion he leaped on them—a very lion he leaped on them*—fits many cases, but is misleading, none the less. The origin of the metaphor in language, and its use and spirit in poetry are to be sought elsewhere. Many common words are faded metaphors. What they expressed originally was the imaginative seizing of something, rather than a clearly grasped and sharply visualized likeness of two things. The Homeric simile presents the incisive lines of a well worked out painting—luminous and illuminating; the similes of Keats and Shelley even at their boldest have this quality. But the metaphors of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Shakespeare are quite different. They are direct, intense, bold; and they are not meant to be expanded into pictures. Metaphors like *flame-eyed fire; the multitudinous laughter of the sea; the sea blossoming with dead; heaven-kissing hill; Come seeling night, Scarf up the tender eye of pitiful day* are a snare to the literal-minded; they do not lend themselves to complete detailed visualization. Nor are they purely decorative embellishments of language. Rather are they the direct presence of an intense, imaginatively and personally touched spirit seeking expression at all costs. Sophocles applies the word *chloros*, *grass-green*, metaphorically to tears and life-blood. If the visual image is too definitely kept in mind it blocks the way to an understanding of what he wishes to express;—tenderness and youthful vigor. In the sonnet of Shakespeare quoted the court scene suggested by the legal terms—must not be visualized.

H. D.'s *Oread*

Whirl up, sea—
Whirl your pointed pines,

Splash your great pines
 On our rocks,
 Hurl your green over us,
 Cover us with your pools of fir

has been unintelligently criticized as far-fetched and straining in its imagery. But metaphors are not condensed pictures. In them, to use a Sophoclean metaphor, the poet *tears up words from within him*. They may be reckless and they may be mixed. They must be imaginative and personal; and they must have the breath of life. In this sense metaphors are not a technical device but the very essence of poetic speech. To them may be applied the lines of Wheelock

On the wide waste the web of twilight, trembling
 Hangs low with stars and night;

EVOCATIVE LANGUAGE: Part of the magic of words in poetry lies in the choice of phrases which are evocative or revelational—of feeling, of mood, of visions, of ideas. Here are examples to be looked into:—

Shakespeare *Hamlet*

tears seven times salt

.
 If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart
 Absent thee from felicity awhile

Keats

The weariness, the fever, and the fret—

.
 My heart aches, and a drowsy numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,

Masters

The days went by like shadows,
 The minutes wheeled like stars

Keats

Rounded by thee, my song should die away
 Content as theirs,
 Rich in the simple worship of a day.

Of these the Shakespearean phrases are evocative of feeling. The second of the lines from Hamlet's dying words has been cited by Matthew Arnold as an instance of happy phrasing, but the first

If thou didst ever hold me in thy heart

is much more than that. Of thousands of phrasings none could give as this one does the intensity and preciousness of love; none could give as *tears seven times salt* does the bitter essence of unrestrained grief. The marvelous thing is that the poet while he vibrates responsively to feeling gains what is not in the feeling as commonly experienced—a music, a mystery, and a personal consecration. In the examples from Keats the words are held together in the vibrational unity of a mood. The verses from Masters show how a poet can take what is common—the passage and marking of time—and make of it, by means of circling imagery, something which has all the grandeur and reach of a cosmic drama. A phrase, again, like *the very flame of love* has this quality of calling forth the imagination and forcing it to share in a bold excursionsal ranging. When Wordsworth speaks of the winds as *upgather'd now like sleeping flowers* he has made calm imaginatively meaningful. Much of the evocative language of poetry is evocative in this sense. The last example from Keats shows phrasing evocative of thought—revelational of thought. Thought springs forth, not in the nakedness or in the marching gear of prose, but polished, rounded off in vivid, colorful dress—at once itself

and more than itself in this intensely personal adornment.

It is only a step, and a natural one, from this last phase of the magic of words—evocative language—to what might be called the triple soul of poetry: feeling, mood, thought. It is they that stir in the sensuously precious body of a poem.

FEELING, MOOD, THOUGHT

The question here is not one of structure, music or phrasing. It is of the inner life and spirit of a poem as a whole;—its artistic idea. The matter is not a simple one: there are many types of poems; and many and subtle are the effects aimed at.

Short lyrics—the love song; the ecstatic nature poem—come from the heart, and mean to speak to the heart. Simple human feelings such as love, grief, joy, hatred, reverence, regret, hope, despair lose something of their obviousness and downrightness as they are projected and held within an objective artistic form. Intensely personal feelings, which are subtle and complex, changing or clustered, as in Sara Teasdale's sequence *Sea Sand* or in Wheelock's *The Black Panther*, are in like manner given value. Some experience—the sight of a girl, the loss of a friend; some object seen—dunes, a meadow, clouds, the sea—or some sensation—the call of a bird, stinging salt spray—mean an emotional response, but the feeling as it takes form gains its drive from imaginative forces and an elaboration from an artistic impulse which is consistently marked by *indirection* and *enriching*. A lover's eyes are notoriously inventive; grief and joy in real life are inarticulate and chaotic, and sharply pointed at actualities. To the poet feeling becomes a psychic color wheel, of one color or of many, revolving slowly or rapidly in a world of his own. Of this Shakespeare's dirge *Come away, come away, death*, Browning's *Home-thoughts from Abroad*, and

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Keats's *Last Sonnet* are examples. If poetry is to be made anything of, this emotional colorfulness must be seen.

What is true of feeling is true also of mood. A mood is a mass of feelings in tonal unity. It matters little what the mood is—melancholy, desolation, revolt, lightheartedness, adoration—it is there in the music, the rhythm, the imagery, the rounded structure and the indwelling spirit. Mood is pervasively present in Swinburne's *A Forsaken Garden*; Baudelaire's *Spleen*; Tennyson's *St. Agnes' Eve*; Heine's *Loreley*; Burns's *My Bonnie Mary* and drinking songs; Whitman's *Song of the Open Road*. Doom hangs heavy over the *Oresteia*; a warlike spirit breathes in *The Seven Against Thebes*; there is a rollicking mood in Aristophanes; a pensive mood tinged with sadness in Swinburne's *Ave atque Vale*; religious fervor gives the tone to the *Paradise* of Dante. A slight study of these poems is all that is needed to reveal how rich a thing mood may become through the sensitive and creative genius of a poet.

Often the purpose of a poem is thought, artistically shaped, taking on vividness and brilliancy from the way it is expressed, and thus made arresting as well as compelling. The thought may be a simple one—a bit of meditative analysis called forth by some incident or experience. Or it may be built on such a contrast as the thoughtful man meets in the spending of his life. Such is Henley's *Invictus* with its last line *I am the captain of my soul*; such is Shakespeare's twentieth sonnet:

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth—
My sinful earth these rebel powers array—
Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
Why so large cost, having so short a lease,
Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?

or Wordsworth's sonnets *The World* and *Mutability*. This is criticism of life; and it may, as in Empedocles, Lucretius, and Dante expand to a world philosophy and an intellectual panorama of life and its forms and forces.

In certain poets—Dante, Browning, Whitman may be chosen as examples—this thought-content is strikingly and persistently present. But all poetry has some of it. Only a large-minded reading of it will save us from seriously misinterpreting poetry. Clearness and consistency are a logician's virtues; and a poet does not present and pursue thought in the spirit of the logician. Rather does he seek it for what it is worth to him, imaginatively and emotionally, and for what he can make of it as he casts his magic spell. That spell need not be one of beauty; and he is not committed to an idealistic, ennobling reading. He may contemplate a Golden Age or he may, as Sandburg and Vachel Lindsay do, attempt to understand as well as get the *feel* of the ugly and tremendously alive modern scene; he may with Whitman study the patterns of the living garment of God or he may unravel it till nothing remains but strands of dirty wool. He may be optimist or pessimist; idealist or cynic. To him man may be the creator or stormer of heavens—or a poor naked two-pronged thing. What he can make of any of these ideas is what counts; how he can exploit them for the imagination and make them vibrant for feeling; how he has them live in the imagery and the music of his verse.

RAPTURE AND VISION

Rapture and vision crown and complete the meaning of poetry. Words like rapture, ecstasy, inspiration all refer to something that has been felt again and again—that the poet is slightly mad in his art. *Seized, beside and outside himself, breathed into and blown through* are their mean-

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ings. Plato in the *Ion* and the *Phaedrus* reflects on poetic madness; Shakespeare alludes to it in his phrase *the poet's eye in a fine frenzy rolling*. Shelley voices it in the *Ode to the West Wind*:—

Make me thy lyre even as the forest is:

Be thou, Spirit fierce,

My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Be through my lips to unawaken'd earth

The trumpet of a prophecy!

Sandburg shows it in his *Prayers of Steel*:

Lay me on an anvil, O God,

Beat me and hammer me into a crowbar.

Let me pry loose old walls.

Let me lift and loosen old foundations.

Lay me on an anvil, O God.

Beat me and hammer me into a steel spike.

Drive me into the girders that holds a skyscraper together.

Take red-hot rivets and fasten me into the central girders.

Let me be the great nail holding a skyscraper through
blue nights into white stars.

Here is what Plato says:

For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not as works of art, but because they are inspired and possessed. And as the Corybanthian revellers when they dance are not in their right mind, so the lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains; but when falling under the power of music and meter they are inspired and possessed; like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from rivers, when they are under the influence of Dionysus, but not when they are in their right mind. . . . For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has

been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him; when he has not attained to this state, he is powerless, and is unable to utter his oracles. . . . The poets are only the interpreters of the gods by whom they are severally possessed.

But he who, not being inspired and having no touch of madness in his soul, comes to the door and thinks that he will get into the temple by the help of art—he, I say, and his poetry are not admitted; the sane man is nowhere at all when he enters into rivalry with the madman.

Ecstasy and *frenzy* are less suitable terms than *rapture* and *inspiration*; they suggest too strongly great intensity or sublimity. *Rapture* is not altogether free from this, but is on the whole the best word to use.

It is a familiar fact, observable throughout the range of human action, that at times a level of performance is reached, not only beyond the ordinary but even beyond our known reserve power. We play or work as if inspired: something seizes us; sustains us we know not how; drives us headlong—we are possessed. In like manner the poet if he is not a mere craftsman of phrases and musical virtuoso is swept along with his theme; is carried beyond himself.

Rapture is not a quality found only in great poetry, although few poems that are great have none of it. It is a natural gift, appearing at times even in children's poems as an imaginative throb in simple motifs. Here are two examples, the first taken from *Adventure* by Hilda Conkling; the second a poem by a twelve year old boy.

Come quickly to me, come quickly,
I am waiting.
I am here on the sand;
Sail close!
I want to go over the waves. . . .
The sand holds me back.

Oh adventure, if you belong to me,
Don't blow away down the sky!

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A CLIPPER THREE DAYS OUT

How I love to feel
The tug of the wheel,
And the swaying deck beneath my feet;
With the chill salt spray
On the deck at play
While the foresail yanks at the sheet!

How I love to be
With the restless sea
On a clipper three days from home;
With a crew strong and hale,
And a frolicking gale,
And our bowsprit buried in foam.

It is the life-giving quality in poems as different in theme and volume of feeling as Sara Teasdale's *Blue Squills*—which gives rapture at its intensest and purest—Vachel Lindsay's *I Want to Go Wandering*; and Roy Helton's *May Jones Takes the Air*

Proud queens, old queens, pale and dead and fair,
Who will be waiting to match her beauty there?
The night is nailed aloft with gold—the wind is on her hair.
And love is searching through her eyes; if time has love to spare
Bring love! Show love! Raise it like a crown!

May Jones of Filbert Street is walking into town!

Nations are marching. Cities yet unseen
Roar on the pavements where her feet have been:
New worlds! Wise worlds! Worlds all gold and green!
This is your birth night. Rain your splendors down!

May Jones of Filbert Street is walking into town.

A little street walker seen through a poet's eyes! Plato is right in calling him divinely mad.

Rapture may be a force that rushes imperfect poetry to great heights. An example of this is Rorty's *Prelude: When We Dead Awaken*. It begins haltingly, wavers close to the ridiculous, and then as the poet is swept along ends in a magnificent crescendo

And I shall play a dawn prelude over the white faces of the hundred
million sleepers till they brighten and smile as the violins
shimmer and sweep;

And the bells will ring out in the steeples, and the tall towers rock,
and light will come blowing high horns out of the east, and
the world will wake sweetly to the smile of a bluebird's warble
and the gold-blue morning bugles of a thousand cock-crows;

And I shall caper and smash among the kettle drums until not one
sleepers is left asleep, and the laughter of all the gods will
roll out with the sunrise, and we shall live, we shall live, we
shall live!

O that day!

Rapture may be started by a thought, an image, a mood. In Browning's *Home-thoughts from Abroad*; Swinburne's *When the hounds of spring are on winter's traces*; and Shakespeare's *When daisies pied and violets blue* there is the same thought—of spring; and there is in each case rapture personally colored. Note the seizure; the involuntary rush of imagery and rhythm; the cumulative extravagance; the whirling and flashing imagination. There may be an image, as that of the crashing forest trees in the second part of *Faust*; we are then hurled with the poet into the very midst of splintered and shattering wood. Something of this rapture is retained. There may be a mood, a subtly personal one, as in Verlaine's *Sagesse*, or a cosmic one, as in Swinburne's *A Nympholept* and *The Temple of Pan* or in Sandburg's *Leather Leggings*; we are again made to feel that the

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poet is inspired—breathed into by his theme and resonant of its tone. The voice need not be a beautiful, clear, and full sounding one; it may be raucous, a thing of weird sounds, for the poet may be possessed by such huge gargoyle gods as Samuel Butler creates in *Erewhon*, with the wind sweeping strangely through their hollow spaces.

When rapture is lacking poetry becomes poor and commonplace. Without the touch of the master who is himself mastered it sinks to a mechanical performance. In lyrical poetry rapture is often strongly emotional. In the epic it need not be that: there, as in Homer, it may be a sustained and sustaining beauty and force which lifts a world lived in to heights ordinary, normal-minded perception does not often reach.

Not only is the poet enraptured, but he has certain visual experiences and imaginings which may be called *visions*. Here again he is slightly mad. Madmen have visions:—they see things that are not there; and their way of seeing is vivid, intense, emotionally unstable, personally distorted, and in a practical sense false. The poet, like all self expressive artists, sees with the inner eye; across it flash objects common to the outer eye—clouds, birds, daffodils and roses, a mountain pass or waterfall, spring and winter, youth and old age, a brook, street scenes, farming, lovemaking, seafaring, war. But all these are strangely illumined and changed. As they become part of the poet's vision they become *charged*, in the sense of being more vividly seen, more intimately felt, more individually colored. They are imaginatively transmuted; made vibrant for feeling; turned into something uniquely personal. It is part of the genius of the poet that he can "*live vision into deed*"; not as the madman does with what he imagines but in the sense of giving through the imagery and structure of his verse artistic form to his visions—casting them forth and giving them a

disciplined life of their own. This is true equally of transmuted visual images of common objects, and of such elaborated purely imaginative creations as Dante's *Hell*, Coleridge's *Kubla Khan*, and Baudelaire's *Don Juan Aux Enfers*.

Examples of poetic visions are: war as it lives in Homer and Aeschylus; hell and heaven as they take form in Dante and Milton; the skylark, the nightingale, the stockdove, and the swallow as they are glorified—and distorted—by Shelley, Keats, Wordsworth, and Swinburne; the rural scene of Burns and Frost; machinery as Sandburg sees it in *Gargoyle*; Chicago and the vast grain fields of the West as they work on his imagination; the tombstones of the *Spoon River Anthology*; Vachel Lindsay's *My Lady is compared to a Young Tree*; gardens as Amy Lowell sees them. They are all, as visions should be, vivid, striking, and personally inspired.

To the imagination of both Homer and Aeschylus the Trojan war was vivid and fraught with infinite possibilities for testing the mettle of men and calling forth human passions, but a comparison of the *Iliad* and the choruses of the *Agamemnon* reveals sharp differences in the spirit and substance of their visions. A nightingale is differently envisaged by Wordsworth and Keats; a swallow, by Swinburne and Toller. Only a Shelley would call dead leaves driven by the wind *pestilence-stricken multitudes*.

Visions must not be reduced to a single aesthetic type. They may be beautiful or fantastically distorted; sublime or idyllic; tragic or comic. Nor is their relation to the actual constant; it varies from a mere added glamour to violent distortion. The question whether Falstaff, Caliban, and the mad Lear are true to life, is beside the point; they are magnificent visions existing in their own right. Rossetti's picture

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It lies from heaven across the flood
Of ether, as a bridge.
Beneath, the tides of day and night
With flame and darkness ridge
The void, as low as where the earth
Spins like a frightful midge.

is astronomically absurd; but it is a splendid vision, nevertheless, by such tests as poetic fire, imaginative force, cosmic emotion, and original seeing. These and inner tests like them are the only ones that ought to be applied to visions. Poetry is not photography; it is neither science nor logic. To see as Sandburg does in *Gargoyles* a bit of machinery as mouth and smashing fist

The fist hits the mouth over and over, again and again.

The mouth bled melted iron, and laughed its laughter of nails rattling.

seems strange, violent, and defiant of logical analysis. But in its bold and personal reinterpretation it shows the true visionary spirit of poetry—the same spirit that is to be found in quieter and less disturbing ways in the simple forms and unobtrusive visions of Wordsworth's *Daffodils* and *To the Cuckoo*. What he says of the cuckoo

Even yet thou art to me
No bird, but an invisible thing,
A voice, a mystery

may be applied to all experience as it flashes across the inner eye of the poet.

The aesthetic meaning of poetry then is to be found in the created unity of structural scheme; metre, music, and rhythm; word values—decorative and evocative—; imagery; thought, feeling, and mood as they express an artistic idea;

and rapture and vision. These, separated in discussion, but interrelated in fact, are the *one soul-in-body* of a poem. They live in its spirit and find form in its substance.

CRITICAL TESTS

It is from the meaning of poetry as an art that all attempts to set values must start. The game of setting values, of calling this poem good and that poem bad, is fascinating and dangerous. It is often played with a narrow, unfair mind directing a heavy hand. To play it in this fashion with poetry as the stake is rash and dangerous, for here is an art which is intensely personal; imaginatively adumbrated in even its simplest forms; and with a very wide range of technical problems and resources. If there is a lack of sensitiveness on the part of the critic; if he is unimaginative, emotionally cool or matter of fact or if he distrusts what is new, the poet pays the price.

A fair critic of a poem looks upon it first of all as an individual bit of creative self-expression. He seeks to capture its spirit and become a sharer in its life. That at least is a debt we owe to the living. He then applies certain general tests gained from a sympathetic study of what poetry means to be and how it gains its varied effects. Music, word-power; sensitiveness, vivid and original reshaping; feeling projected and enriched, freshness, rapture, vision—these are some of the things to be looked for in good poetry. There is no one formula for an effective mixture. The proportions differ from poet to poet, from theme to theme. Modesty, flexibility, and urbanity are three virtues the critic too often lacks. Let those who will play the hazardous game of caging within their prejudices that *light, volatile thing*, the poet; and let him who must, suffer.

MUSIC

BY PAUL KRUMMEICH

Music is direct and all but universal in its appeal. Immediately accessible to all, it does not give its full message to everyone, but there are few who are indifferent or hostile in their response. Mankind is musical, though in a low degree; the unmusical individual is rare. The fault lies not there, but in a false reading of what music is and what it can give. An object for contemplation must not be demanded of this, a non-representational art. It must not be thought of as nothing more than a clever, intellectually relaxing combination of pleasing sounds. Nor must it be intellectualized, for its origins and meanings are at a deeper, subconscious, instinctive level.

Beyond music as an art practised and enjoyed there are crude, spontaneous expressions of human musicality. Such crude music, like untrained dancing or an awkward gesture, is worth considering, for it is one of many forms of human expression. As it persists there must be some need for it. Perhaps it is an outlet through which humanity rids itself of something requiring this particular means.

This original musicality may be studied in the average man before his instincts have deteriorated through repression and disuse, and before he has made concessions to convention. It may be taken in that irrepressible young animal, the "real boy." Very early he becomes an accomplished whistler of tunes. It is one of his great ambitions, and he rarely fails at it. When he runs out of known tunes he makes up his own surely and easily; he is composer and

performer in one. This comes naturally to him; he considers it part of his personality; and he expects others to appreciate his virtuosity.

But why all this strenuous labor? Has he aesthetic aspirations? Hardly. That would suggest education and be distasteful to him. No, he just has to whistle. Perhaps he prefers his own kind of music? He has neither choice nor preference. He whistles because he must. It is just one of his many delightful ways of expressing himself; and we who are superior to such foolishness wonder why. He has no such problems; while we speculate, he whistles and is untiring in his whistling. The fact of the matter is this: he does not whistle to entertain himself; he whistles in order to *waste—he must rid himself of excess vitality*. His whistling is a safety valve. Were we to seal his lips, he would find some other playful way of expending energy.

He soon demands a more substantial medium of expression. Unaccompanied melody now seems to him a lonely thing; he craves and gets a drum, which he beats on as though it were made of armor-plate. He loves his drum because it “serves him well,” and he strains it because he needs all it can give him. It is to establish temporal boundaries—he needs a rhythmical frame-work for his melodies; and he now enjoys the *orderly flow* of the energy he wastes. New thrills are sought; for him the time has come to sing. So he chooses his songs with great care, making sure they are popular. The text seems to furnish a new attraction, but he soon realizes that for him “the tune is the thing,” and he is satisfied to hum or whistle it. This answers his purpose, and he is both healthy and happy. But is all this wasted energy of a purely physical nature? I think not. Our young man is not content to blow bubbles or to shout. He whistles, hums, or sings melodies, and he beats his drum rhythmically. Now it happens that *melody* and *rhythm* are two *fundamental constituents of music*. Since the boy has somehow mas-

tered these without instruction, he may be called musical by nature—modestly so, since he is as yet undeveloped and untrained. He is not introduced as a musical prodigy; I merely wish to prove that normal man is musical by necessity—truly musical by nature. That he is as yet innocent of harmony is not so strange. Music as he knows it—melody and rhythm—has thus existed for centuries and is to be found in such primitive condition among uncivilized races. What is called harmony is an element of elaboration and coordination; a product of the science of music; the fruit of a thousand years of labor.

This, my story of the boy, is based on vivid recollection and careful observation. Who will deny that the boy, in making up his tunes when he feels like it, creates? He is not as yet an artist, and he creates in order to waste—there is a great deal of such wasteful creation in nature.

But why does he choose music and enjoy it so easily? Suppose we discover *what* it is that the boy expresses. We have found that for him “the tune is the thing,” and that he cares but little for the text to his songs. Thus he neither gets nor gives much information, and his intellect is rarely strained. But if he cannot tell a story or describe an object, what remains for him to say?

As he grows older he is not entirely dependent on the guidance of his immature intellect; there are other stronger, older forces at work to insure his survival. The sober man of science calls these “instincts.” Has our boy somehow “drifted,” in blind obedience to an inner voice? Has he sensed the true nature of music and intuitively fathomed its possibilities?

I am inclined to connect his prodigious waste of music with an “atavistic leakage”—an irruption of the remote past. Nietzsche claims that the melody of the folk-song is an *orgiastic* expression—psychic overflow, and that the beauty of the melody inspired the poets to furnish a text.

This seems strange, but is possible. Some years ago I sketched a melodic fragment which came to me spontaneously while I was reading a book that had no bearing on music. The fragment had the marks of a lullaby, and before the sketch was half finished some parts of a typical lullaby text appeared just as spontaneously, properly rhymed and all. This incident shows that a text may be born of a melody. Thus I surely expressed myself through the medium of music without conscious guidance or desire to inform. The boy's musical activities are cruder but not dissimilar in kind. Great men have recognized these peculiar expressive possibilities of music. Richard Wagner claims that music is the instrument of the "heart" and the art of music its conscious language (of the heart, not the head). Music, he says, expresses simply emotions, love and longing in their many shadings. To him it is eminently fitted to express states of feeling and moods. On this point all great composers agree. Schopenhauer had expressed himself similarly long before Wagner. They are right in saying that music cannot express anything but feelings. Thus our boy seems to have found intuitively the ideal medium through which he may easily and adequately express this excess of "feeling"; with further growth his atavistic tendencies may be submerged in practical interests and a conventional life fitted to the community. He becomes a civic asset—steadfast, keen and practical—"successful." He no longer whistles like a fiend, nor does he need his drum. His surplus energy is drained off through other channels. His fondness for music becomes passive; he patronizes concerts and operas. He is interested in many things, but for some reason he does not *create*.

Or he may mature differently and retain many of his childlike traits. He is still vividly imaginative and spontaneous. He seems to escape the chilling and sobering in-

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fluences of life's hardships and does not lose his boyish enthusiasm. Because he lacks the practical qualities of the successful man he is called a day dreamer. He lives on a different plane—in a world of his own making. He builds air castles, but he no longer stops there. His imagination is creative; its visions he expresses through some medium—he creates.

Some such creative surplus marks all great works of art. They have a way of captivating and overwhelming; their wealth of substance and form seems to emanate from an excess of life, of vitality. How could an artist give off from his own without impoverishing himself if there were no such surplus? In his abundance we feel that he draws his strength from an inexhaustible well, and that he is endowed with unusual powers of imagination, intellect, and will to form and express himself.

Great artists are well aware of this source, from which all art flows, and they give their instincts the credit. We are justified in believing that our older faculties—instincts—are the stronger ones. They create while the intellect merely regulates. Instincts may be observed where observation is easy—in the life of birds and bees. We can watch them at work. They build their nests and hives without experience or instruction; it is their natural endowment. Such activities are merely useful and necessary and have little to do with human art; but this instinctive activity is, after all, creative. In this they are related to creative human instincts.

When man's material comforts are assured he aspires to finer things; he craves what delights his soul. Art satisfies this demand to a very large extent. It comes from humble beginnings and matures slowly. We can imagine primitive man seeking relaxation and congenial employment in carving strange figures on a cliff or coaxing musical sounds from some crudely made instrument. Whatever agitates

man's soul he is apt to express, and what our remote ancestors acquired and developed of simple ideas and skill in expression was passed on until the accumulation sufficed to produce a Michelangelo or a Beethoven. All spontaneous expression is blind obedience to instinctive impulses, without consciousness of the nature of the agitation or the usefulness of the result. It is the great ideas that need a rich planting for their elaboration, and the forces of the intellect for their expression.

Instincts may be considered a phase of our subconscious life; and the subconscious life may be thought of in terms of vibrations. It is known that this life is constantly creative and attuned to a certain tension or pitch, which may be called its *tonus*. This is its normal condition and escapes our attention. However, an intensified state of vibration occasionally occurs. We become vaguely conscious of this unusual intensity and call it a mood. In art it is often called a creative mood. It is in this mood that we must look for the origin of the *artistic idea*. Among the many gifts of genius we recognize his capacity for losing himself in pure contemplation of the objects of this world. What he sees is their appearance or form; he is not interested in the thing or its uses. The painter does not regard the tree as a botanist would—nor as the lumberman would. What he delights in is its “pure form,” and in what that form arouses in him or suggests. It is in his capacity for such contemplation that the artist differs from the average man; he seeks to beautify and enrich the world. We know that a good photograph produces an exact likeness of an object, but that is all. It is different with a painting. Interested in the form of an object, and not in its construction or usefulness, the painter has a less complex and more direct vision. He is capable of pure contemplation: his attention is concentrated on one single phase of the object; as he loses himself in the object he “absorbs” it. His crea-

tive phantasy becomes active; it selects, eliminates, adds and changes. Thus he constructs an image. It is this image he paints, and not the actual tree, which merely acts as a clue to his imagination. He himself is quite unconscious of this process. We say of the object of his contemplation that it *inspires* him. This inspiration seems to emanate from some object or event, which energizes his creative instincts. He paints the tree not as it appears but as he feels it ought to look; he paints what he feels. He discards what seems unsuited; in this sense he idealizes the object.

I have attempted a rough sketch of the process of painting because all of us are fairly familiar with this type of artistic expression. The other arts are expressions of different phantasies through different channels. All of them are, however, more or less concerned with an object or event. Phantasies differ from individual to individual. They differ also in type—producing results as unlike as the marbles of ancient Greece, the art of the Renaissance, and the nineteenth century wealth of music.

The creative process in music differs from that of the other arts. The composer, unlike his fellow-artist, has no object; neither can he present one in tangible form. His medium of expression does not permit this. While music is all pervading, like some strange fragrance, the nature of which we cannot understand, it is invisible, intangible, and exists nowhere except in the hearer's consciousness. Ambros, the great historian of music, has given a masterly description of the difference between painting and music: "Music is the greatest painter of soul-states and the poorest for material objects." Remember that our boy expressed nothing but excess of feeling—moods. What is the nature of the feelings music gives? In the boy they were crude and close to what we call pleasure and pain, but then he was no artist. Such are not the feelings Schopenhauer

and Wagner refer to; nor yet what Ambros calls "soul-states." Feelings which art expresses and sympathetically arouses are of a different nature; they have been called "ideal reflex-feelings." Not so substantial nor enduring as our physical feelings, they are far more flexible; and are volatile because they have been freed from all dross in the crucible of the artist's phantasy. We call them aesthetic feelings. Since the origin of the artistic idea must be looked for in that intensified state of feeling called the creative mood and since all art flows from the same fountainhead, we shall build our structure on this.

THE PROCESS OF CREATION

The chief difficulty in the description of the creative process in music is due to the absence of an object. There is no tangible something there as there is in painting. The painter, though he absorbs the object, does not cause it to lose its identity; only a partial fusion of artist and object takes place. There remains a remote resemblance between object and painting. Such near or remote resemblance proves that the artist never grew totally oblivious of his object. A complete fusion would be required to destroy the identity of the object. Such total absorption occurs when all impressions are fully transmuted into a feeling-state. Then a *pure mood* results, and nothing tangible remains—not even the memory of an object. The painter, sculptor, and poet would be badly served because they cannot project a pure mood devoid of all conscious elements. It would be difficult to conceive the possibility of expressing a pure mood except in terms of an *audile phantasy* and through the strange medium we call musical tones. The composer's phantasy is not concerned with the conscious contemplation of objects; it deals with feelings devoid of such conscious elements. He is aware of the character of

his mood, be it light or sombre, but beyond that he knows nothing. What he forms emanates from the depths of his mind; he draws it from the well of the subconscious. Our subconsciousness derives its substance from countless sources, every inlet leading to some reservoir, where all is gathered. What the composer expresses can be nothing else than what he has inherited and what he has acquired. By the former I mean those innate tendencies which I should like to call ancestral knowledge, congenitally passed on to us; the latter can be nothing else than the sum of our impressions. All this must be fully submerged in our subconsciousness before we can call it our very own. Subconscious life, harmonious and undivided, is the element wherein ideas may quietly develop and mature, in no way interfered with by our conscious forces, such as intellect and will. The birth of an idea is the spontaneous giving off of a surplus projected by the subconscious into the artist's phantasy. A pure mood—a subconscious idea—may eventually develop into a thought—a conscious idea—but the latter is by no means the stuff of which pure music is made. The composer deals with pure moods devoid of all intellectual illumination. He develops a *musical idea*, which is revealed to him as ideal sound, as a sound-image; this is either a melody (a melodic fragment), a harmony, or a rhythmical figure. Since he has no real object to guide his phantasy, some enthusiasts claim that he is the greatest of artists, that he, and he alone, actually creates something out of nothing. Art is not absolute creation but the projection of that which the artist's phantasy has formed. This phantasy eliminates groups, and coordinates many things; thus it makes something new and different out of the old—it transforms something. So is the chemist a creator, that is, transmuter of substances. All art is such transmuting—more is not needed.

The composer of pure music lacks an object, but he has

his *mood*, and that is all he must have. For the development of his idea he depends on his capacity to hold and and if necessary to recall this particular mood. By concentrating on the musical idea through introspection, he is in intimate contact with the mood which gave birth to this idea. Thus, he may gather many more musical fragments, which, coming from the same source, are related to the original idea. These units he joins according to the laws of musical composition; what does not fit into the scheme he rejects. These unsatisfactory fragments seem to return whence they came and are apt to reappear, changed and matured. Beethoven's and Brahms' sketch books show many examples of such subconscious development, and the reader will find two significant examples in my own composition sketches in this book. I wish, however, to add that some smaller compositions do not require elaboration and adjustment by reflection; they are projected into the composer's phantasy *en bloc*. But such marvelous spontaneity of expression there cannot be in larger compositions, which often require years for their completion. Since the composer cannot hold or recall a particular mood at will his labors are subject to serious interruptions, but he avoids such periods of stagnation by devoting himself to two or more sketches of a different character, thus he may readily find himself *in the mood* for one or the other.

Through music, the composer projects and expresses his moods, phases of his inner life; in no other art would such expression be possible. Some of our ultra-modern painters, who seek a music in colors, may some day be equally successful, but not until we adjust our visual receptivity. As yet, we are unaccustomed to analyze our visual impressions; we want to understand what we see, while we are quite satisfied to feel what we hear. The statue, the painting, and the poem surely agitate our phantasy and arouse our feelings, but they also appeal to our curious intellect more or less.

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We are informed by some process of the nature of an object or event. Thus a phase of consciousness coexists with our feeling reaction, and a pure mood is inhibited.

Music lacks that capacity for satisfying curiosity; it gives no information. While a trained musician may emphasize the form, the message of music eludes his intellect and finds its way immediately to deeper, older sections of the soul. Music appeals to our feelings without being understood by a searching intelligence; yet its message is profoundly grasped. We assimilate music directly—by intuition; we enjoy it like a sunset or blue sky. Who would care to analyze these phenomena, unless he be an astronomer? While the other arts permit of the objectification of a definite something and can give information, music deals with types. It expresses emotions, joy or grief, in their countless nuances. Anyone of these nuances may reflect many individual things, happy or sad, within a definite range: such are possibilities and limitations of music.

The melody of the folk-song can fit equally well any one of all the different stanzas. While each particular stanza describes a different phase of the text, all of them deal with one and the same story. As a result, a fundamental unity of spirit prevails. It does not matter which came first, melody or text; the spirit of the story and the melody must be in agreement in the true folk-song; they are actually one and the same element because the music intensifies the emotional substratum of the story—its spirit. It must then fit equally well each individual stanza.

I have compared the many repetitions of a certain melody with so many roses on the same bush. They are all more or less alike because they belong to one certain variety; yet, each one has sufficient individuality to be enjoyed differently. Moritz Hauptmann puts it concisely by saying that language deals with specific things, while music provides the algebraic formula.

Music is the poorest conveyor of information; that is the one thing it cannot give. It exists for a different purpose. While our intellectual faculties enable us to solve many of life's problems, there are phases of our inner life which defy our intellectual analysis; yet they demand expression and yearn for a sympathetic reception. There is a need of a communion on a deeper psychic level. Where all other means prove inadequate, music provides the infallible medium through which man may express the agitation of his soul. What he thus reveals is a vision of his subconscious life.

While intellectually we live on very different levels, in the realm of the subconscious the bond uniting mankind is so old, and the affinity so deep, that an appeal is felt at once; our response is inevitable and immediate. Pure music is not of intellectual origin. It is a spontaneous projection of man's deepest nature where all channels run full and strong. This accounts for the force of such an appeal; it overwhelms us, and there is neither time nor space for intellectual scrutiny and analysis. Such a message is too deep for any intellect and never was intended for it.

Music is a communion on an emotional level. Through music man appeals to older forms of our *psyche* where a message is felt without being understood. This is the true reason for the universal popularity of music.

In order to avoid an incomplete description of music, we must not forget that there is another way of enjoying it—a kind of scientific *apperçu*. The study of the science of music—canon, counterpoint, and fugue—teaches us to analyze and to understand the form in its organization. Any trained musician may readily fathom the intricate organization of a composition and follow its presentation in critical fashion: such is the attitude of the formalist, who cannot enjoy the substance of music because to him music is just form devoid of all content—an interesting

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arabesque. I, too, am capable of this scientific attitude, but I prefer to enjoy the forest rather than count its trees. A pure enjoyment of music does not require a knowledge of canon, counterpoint, and fugue because the substance of music is a purely human element—just emotions, joy or grief—and immediately accessible to all mankind.

That the trained musician enjoys an intricate musical structure more intelligently than the untrained is true; but does he enjoy it more? I have no misgivings in this matter and should gladly sacrifice my training and take a chance with the masses before accepting the sterile pleasures of the formalist.

The science of music exists for a two-fold purpose. The laws of composition guide the composer in the development of a single sketch into a more or less elaborate and well-ordered musical structure, which the performer analyzes by means of his knowledge of these same laws, and with the help of the printed page. While many smaller compositions, such as folk-songs and dance tunes, have been successfully passed on to us by tradition, a system of graphic fixation was essential for the preservation of larger works. This system permits of a fair degree of accurate notation and serves the composer to fix his ideas and furnish information as to how they are to be executed.

From a crude beginning of musical notation, which permitted an artist a latitude of freedom of interpretation, a system of mathematically accurate fixation was developed. With anything so volatile as a sound image and its elaboration this is a hazardous undertaking. The coercion of an ideal substance into a rigid form is bound to involve the sacrifice of many delicate shadings. But the composer trusts his fellow artist, the trained and gifted performer, to divine what defied fixation and to restore all that which had to be abandoned in order to enchain a fleeting mood. The artist-performer considers the printed page in the light of a sug-

gestion, and his training enables him to analyze the form thus presented. Thus he discovers and familiarizes himself with the details of the composition and their organization; he sees melodies and harmonies in their rhythmical coördination. He reaches the nature of the mood which the composer expressed.

This mood he responds to as far as he can make it his own. He then plays the music as though it were his own work—with great affection and enjoyment.

The amateur differs from the artist by his imperfect training and lack of artistic penetration. A thorough analysis is for the most part beyond his powers, and he rarely gains access to the true nature of the composition. The printed page represents to him a law to which he bows with undue servility, or he fails to grasp what the form suggests. In the first instance there is a rather machine-like and monotonous performance; and in the second, an interpretation devoid of all significance.

Let us return for a moment to the nature of music. It seems that some of our ultra-modern poets have envied the musician his unique medium of expression. Unfortunately their efforts to intensify the musical element of language have seriously interfered with the significance of the poem. We can well appreciate their yearning for finer tonal nuances, but I fear they are poaching on the musician's preserve.

PROGRAM MUSIC

While program music is modern, it is nothing new. The composers of the classic period used it occasionally. Ever since Liszt we have been deluged with descriptive music, and, as it seems to have become the rule, a discussion of this phase of music will not be out of place.

Since we are familiar with the nature and origin of our

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phantasy pictures, we can say with Lipps that a mood may develop into a thought; a connection must exist between the mental background and our consciousness. All roads run both ways; hence it should be possible for our conscious forces to commune with the mental background and enlist its coöperation. In pure music we depend upon pure moods resulting from a total assimilation of impressions; the identity of the objects is fully submerged, and nothing but a mood remains.

In the other arts impressions are only partially absorbed, and a conscious idea of the identity of the object is retained. The painter's phantasy elaborates a conscious idea of an object or event. The painting which he offers our visual (real) contemplation corresponds with his phantasy picture (his ideal conception) of the object or event. In a similar way the poet's phantasy elaborates conscious impressions, and he conveys to us by means of adequate description his vision of the object or event. He arouses in our consciousness a phantasy picture, which corresponds somehow with what he sees.

Program music is the outcome of a similar process. When the composer calls his work a tone painting or tone poem, he seems to know that he has employed the painter's or the poet's phantasy; he wants to create a tonal illustration of an object or event. Only a partial fusion of artist and object occurs, and the identity of the object is retained and furnishes his program to which he must more or less adhere. Should he lose himself completely, he would also lose the idea (his program), and its tonal illustration would be rendered impossible. He is chained to a definite idea and must compose music accordingly. A conscious idea of an object or event awakens his interest, excites his phantasy, and arouses his creative powers. Whatever moods are thus born are by no means pure moods because his subconscious forces are influenced by intellect and will. His moods are tinged with

a foreign influence, which guides and limits his creative freedom.

The composer of program music must not allow his phantasy to roam beyond fixed limits. Such coercion is sure to interfere with the free development and full display of his total creative capacity. He is obliged to labor within the borders of a restricted area and dare not drift into regions beyond the limits.

In pure music we are dealing with a transmutation of countless impressions, fully submerged and consciously forgotten. We have undivided and harmonious subconscious activity, and a surplus of pure moods finds its way into the composer's phantasy in the form of a sound image—a musical idea. The composer's phantasy is unrestrained in its creative freedom—the result is pure music. Such music is immediately accessible to all because it is grasped by intuition; it is a communion on an emotional level where response is inevitable and spontaneous.

Program music is of a different nature. A conscious idea excites the composer's phantasy, and his creative freedom is correspondingly restricted. The object is but incompletely submerged, and a conscious idea persists. Thus a foreign element inhibits an harmonious and undivided subconscious life, and impure moods result. Such moods cannot successfully commune with pure moods without the medium of an interpreter. Until the necessary information is supplied, we sway this way and that and feel that peculiar need of orientation which the program must supply because the music cannot give it. Program music repays study since it is so modern and offers such a vast field for musical expression.

In our enjoyment of pure music we are free from all coercion and open to any impression; there is nothing to interfere with our receptivity, and we fully abandon ourselves to our reactions. Because of this all kinds of phantasy pictures are likely to emerge spontaneously. Being a crystal-

lization, emanating from a mood, they form conscious correlates to a phase of subconscious life. These images interpret and thus illuminate the very mood from which they came, and we feel them to be the only correct interpretation of how we react to a particular composition. We cannot understand how another might react differently. We forget, or do not know, that moods which are fundamentally similar are capable of many different crystallizations. We ought to remember that pure music emanates from and terminates in the very fountain-head of life, and that all differences are due to our individual interpretation of our reaction to its appeal.

In program music freedom of receptivity is interfered with in more ways than one. An understanding of program music is impossible without the information the program gives. If we are to understand the composition, we must familiarize ourselves with the *story*, as described in the program. Now, the order of our perception is quite reversed. What the program conveys to us our phantasy elaborates; thus our feelings are aroused, and a mood is established. So far all is well because nothing has as yet interfered with our interpretation of the story, and our reactions fully conform to our individual conception. Mood and intellect commune through the medium of our phantasy picture, as they do in our enjoyment of literature.

Some of us are sufficiently naive to demand of the composer tonal illustration fully corresponding with our own idealization of the story, and we object when the mood created by our reaction to the music is not identical with the one fixed by the assimilated story. Since, however, we differ individually, this is really asking too much. Knowing that the music is fixed, we learn to make concessions and adjust ourselves to a compromise between our own and the composer's individuality. All program music is *first* enjoyed through compromise. Music, however, has strange powers.

On repeated hearings, we are inclined to abandon our own interpretation bit by bit until we fully agree with the composer; then, and not until then, is our enjoyment complete. We have accepted the composer's interpretation, but have not forgotten the story. Thus that delightful variety of reaction which affects and controls our enjoyment of pure music is impossible. In program music a conscious idea persists, and we enjoy the composition as fast as we grasp its meaning. Such is the limitation of program music.

I hope I have not given the impression that pure music cannot or should not be enjoyed without the assistance of phantasy pictures. I merely intended to prove that phantasy pictures of all kinds may emerge spontaneously from a pure feeling reaction, as in pure music; while in program music a definite image is set by our intellectual reading of the story. To be sure, there are many music lovers who have never experienced such images; they are really the fortunate ones because the ideal enjoyment of pure music should be a pure feeling reaction. Nevertheless, these illusive images are fully justified when they emerge spontaneously, as in pure music. Those who experience them are in need of such assistance, while others who are capable of a pure feeling reaction are better served without them.

VOCAL MUSIC

When I mentioned that program music offers a vast field for musical expression I had in mind one of its most popular forms—vocal music—song, oratorio, and opera. Many enthusiastic admirers of pure music can see but little good in combinations of music and language and regard all vocal music as a hybrid thing. But I decline to share this conviction, which is based on a misconception of the nature of language. It can be shown that language consists of two elements, one of which is generally underestimated and often

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ignored. We know that language exists primarily to facilitate communication; as such it is little more than an efficient system of signs and signals useful in every day life. But is all linguistic communion of such a prosaic nature? Have not our poets somehow divined that language harbors far more than this utility. Surely they have revealed another element by means of which man may express other things. Whatever information the poet gives is never for its own sake; it is but a means to a very different end. He fathoms those depths of soul where thoughts are still deeply imbedded in feelings; and what is there revealed to him none but his *own language* can express. He has divined that other, the poetic, element, which is very closely related to music.

Music also expresses feelings, even those which as yet are pure moods. In the song we have poetry and music combined, and both agree in spirit. While the music cannot elucidate the text, it expresses and arouses feelings identical with the *substance* of the poem. Thus, *music intensifies the emotional substratum of the poetic thought*. Is then vocal music such a hybrid thing? To be sure it is not pure music—it is program music *par excellence*.

TONE PAINTING

Painting in tones—Tonmalerei—is frequently employed in program music, and the success of a tonal illustration of material things depends greatly upon the composer's skilful use of this medium. However, we must not overestimate its powers. Music has but two primary colors, bright and sombre; while it has many of their nuances, it has neither blue nor yellow nor any other color. Musical sounds may be high or low, loud or soft; their timbre, harsh or mellow, metallic or woody, but these are tone colors and cannot be visualized except through such associations as they may sug-

gest. When we speak of *audition colorée* we are dealing with that rare capacity for hearing sounds and visualizing definite colors simultaneously. This is a purely subjective condition and has, therefore, no general validity. Music is for the ear and not for the eye; and Ambros was right in saying that "music is the worst painter of material objects."

THE PURPOSE OF MUSIC

Since all things exist for a sufficient reason it may be concluded that they are intended for and capable of serving some purpose. But we are again and again told that art is an exception to this rule. Art for Art's sake! is the phrase used. Is it acceptable? Can art be utterly useless—a mere luxury? The artist, as he expresses himself in and through his art, communes with mankind on the level of instinct and feeling. If this communion exists merely for the purpose of communing, art is reduced to a thing of little purpose or value. He objects to this abuse of art and to the evulgating of what he prizes. The lover of fine music can readily understand why he cries out, hurt and indignant, when someone prostitutes his melodies to greed. Carried on the crest of this resentment, artist and art lover alike may refuse to concede that art might exist for any, even the most ideal purpose. Only in the seclusion of "Art for Art's sake" do they feel art to be safe. To some of us, however, it is inconceivable that so fine a thing should exist at all were it not for some equally fine purpose. The real difficulty lies in the discovery of an "end" sufficiently lofty and noble.

Two of the many opinions offered may be set in contrast. For Schopenhauer music was balsam to a wounded heart—a bridge to his beloved Nirvana. Nietzsche credited this art with very different powers; to him music was not intended to encourage resignation; on the contrary, he speaks of the

birth of Greek tragedy from the spirit of music. Is music creative? Is it created, perhaps, to create? Schopenhauer and Nietzsche were both right each after his own fashion. Schopenhauer found in our life but an endless chain of yearning and satiety, and existence devoid of all true happiness. To him man's only avenue of escape from the severities and disappointments of life lies in the "negation of the will," and his only true salvation in the shadows of the Nirvana. He loved music which was simple and natural, the soothing and consoling kind; such music put him into altitudes where one might exist unencumbered by time and space. For Nietzsche music emerges from the union of the *Dionysian* and *Apollonian*, the former embodying our vital forces, unbridled but creative, whereas the latter represents that tempering element which binds these very forces, thereby controlling and shaping their manifestation. It is easy to identify the Dionysian with that *surplus of vitality* from which all art emanates. In the Apollonian may be recognized the *form-giver*, a restraining force born of reflection. It conveys the substance, which is Dionysian. What we perceive is form, what we feel is substance—that vital force which compels our response. Through form we commune with the artist; what he expresses is Dionysian, and what he arouses in us is the Dionysian in us. Thus we are led to conclude that art is not art unless appeal meets with response, and that there is no art until "the circle is closed." The surplus which the artist expresses seems to fill a void in us, thereby arousing latent powers; and our response to his appeal is nothing other than our becoming conscious of such awakened powers. This new phase of consciousness is "pure joy," and I believe it to be identical with that elusive element which we call beauty. The Dionysian is the fuel, art is the spark—is not the Dionysian then the substance of the *feu sacré*? To me beauty is the awakener of slumbering powers, a source of re-vitalization, hitherto unknown and un-

suspected. But is beauty generated in us for no reason other than to reveal its existence?

There must be a way of fittingly employing these new powers, born of a new state of consciousness. If it is conceded that the mood of genius transcends what the clear practical man produces, then it follows that genius is endowed with a consciousness far superior to that of the average clever man. When we experience this new state of consciousness, are not we too, temporarily lifted to higher levels? Let us say, for want of a better term, that genius is endowed with a fourth-dimensional consciousness. How then can his mood be appreciated by those who attempt to fathom its significance with an average mentality? May we not call those rare moments ecstasy—which are ours whenever we fully respond to the appeal of genius, flashes of a finer, of a fourth-dimensional consciousness? When we are thus transported to higher levels how can we look down contented on our own world so far below? This world cannot be remade; but we can and should employ our powers for the purpose of raising our ideals, and therefore ourselves, to higher levels. If the world is what we make it can we not at least remake our own little world, and make it a finer world for ourselves? If art endows us with that clearer vision and these new powers, could it have a finer purpose? It seems fitting to give a quotation from F. Max Müller's *Vedanta-Philosophy*: "Even when the higher light appears, that higher light does not destroy the reality of the former world, but imparts to it, even in its transitory and evanescent character, a fuller reality and a deeper meaning."

THE ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

RHYTHM

While music cannot paint objects, it has rare capacities for giving various kinds and degrees of motion. Whether

motion be fast or slow, vigorous or gentle, rising or falling, it is all within the range of musical expression. The rocking of the cradle and the gliding of the boat are successfully suggested by the even and gentle rise and fall of the accompanying tone figures in the lullaby and the barcarole. The gallop of the horse and the humming of the spinning wheel are felt and visualized with equal ease when appropriate rhythmical figures are employed. There are countless examples accessible to every one. While speaking of motion it is important to consider rhythm—a most vital element in music. In sculpture there is motion arrested, as it were, and in painting flowing lines suggest movement. But music gives the motion directly. There is no music without motion duly governed; and it is this mysterious governing force which must be investigated. All of us are familiar with the periodical accentuation of the even flow of melodious sound. We call it rhythm, and its apperception is both easy and natural to us. Its origin, however, is vague. When Kant stated that “time is a form of our perception,” “an internal sense,” he probably had no intention of defining the nature of musical rhythm, since he took but little interest in music. Nevertheless, he pointed to the right direction for future investigators and speculators. Our sense of rhythm seems so deeply imbedded in our nature that we take its many manifestations for granted, and but few of us seem conscious of the fact that some vital force must govern all such organic conduct. Since pulsation and breathing are conspicuous rhythmical functions some writers have been tempted to found musical rhythm on these phenomena. There surely must be some connection, near or remote. However, it seems more logical to assume that both pulsation and breathing, as well as all other governed functions of a living organism, are adjusted and controlled by one and the same mysterious force. In the beginning of organic existence, if the first feeble impulse of life was succeeded by others at irregular

intervals, then the young organism was subjected to shocks causing undue friction and hence premature destruction. If life began arhythmically, it certainly had need of speedily adjusting itself to a mode of existence permitting of a minimum of friction in order to survive. Does it not seem more reasonable to believe that life once established would be protected by nature against conditions hostile to its normal development? A governing force is most intimately linked with the very beginning of life, and no continuity of being is possible without a rhythmically functioning organism. All life is motion, and rhythm is the manifestation of that innate force which governs this motion by intersecting its continuity at equidistant moments and thereby dividing its duration into time series of equal length. Without such periodical accentuation a satisfactory apperception of music—time filled with sound—would be impossible.

The application of rhythm to music is simple and easily understood as soon as we have learned to translate our ideas of space and its division into that less familiar element, called time. By associating space and time relations we may learn to understand rhythmic time measures. There is only one difficulty—overcoming our habits of thinking in visual terms. Space proportion relates to the grouping of space units; musical rhythm creates a well-ordered whole of time measures, filled with musical sound. It is impossible to appreciate a melody of some length unless it is divided into equal sections sufficiently short to be easily assimilated. Thus it is the rhythmic element in a composition which allows us to apprehend it as an orderly continuum, expressed through the medium of time.

Musical rhythm must not be confused with mechanical rhythm. The even swing of a pendulum and the steady throbbing of a motor are of a mechanical nature, and hence coerced; whereas musical rhythm is the expression of an inner life, and therefore relatively free.

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The human voice is the oldest musical instrument, and music expressed itself first in the form of song. In the song rhythm is present in the directest and simplest form. Instrumental music is, after all, nothing but an extension and elaboration of a simple melody. Because all singing is governed by a well regulated breathing process each section of a song must be adjusted to the demands of a single exhalation, and each succeeding section must stand out as an individual unit, because the inhalation separates it from what precedes. The unification of such sections into groups easily appreciated and assimilated is the purpose of rhythm in music. This succession of time units in relation to breathing may be understood by taking the text of a song and reading it aloud. It is not difficult to discover the rhythmic organization of any melody if the number of its measures is divided into units of equal duration. For instance, if the complete melody comprises sixteen measures, as in the Chopin *Prelude* opus 28, number 7, the first eight measures constitute one-half with which the other half forms a perfect balance. A further sub-division of each half into twice four measures and each four into twice two will reveal a similar balance of temporal proportion. Just as soon as we realize this possibility of equal division and subdivision into sections, comprehensible and relatively complete in themselves, we experience the balance and through it the musical rhythm.

MELODY

Since the rhythmic element makes possible a combination of tones into that comprehensible unity, called music, we must give to rhythm the highest ranking. This is so obvious that rhythm is taken for granted. Melody and harmony are the focus of musical interest. The tune is the thing; music which lacks good melodies is short lived.

But what constitutes a good melody? Definitions are

plentiful. Probably the most popular one reads: "Melody is a succession of tones pleasing to the ear." Unfortunately, this easy definition is neither wholly true nor altogether false. Because it is a half truth, it is unsatisfactory. Many excellent melodies are far from pleasing. A good melody need no more please the ear than a good painting need delight the eye. The test of the artistic lies neither in the beautiful nor the ugly, but in the significant, in the widest meaning of this term. Music expresses the moods of life, many of which fail to attract.

We know that in the creative mood feelings are projected into the composer's phantasy where they crystallize into a sound-image. What we have called a musical idea is the spontaneous tonal manifestation of such a sound-image. While occasionally musical ideas are created in complete form, they generally appear as musical fragments which must be coördinated and conjoined until unity, which permits of intuitive apprehension, is gained. Such musical ideas are meaningful and identical with good melodies. Thus we may define melody as the tonal manifestation of a sound-image which is generated by a state of feeling and translated into the composer's imagination during the creative mood. That its physical expression occurs in the form of a rhythmically governed tone group is inevitable; but a definition must interpret the nature of the object, and not its manifestation.

HARMONY

In rhythm as well as in melody the composer yields to vital forces which dominate him. In harmony, however, the thoughtful element prevails. As a product of science, harmony emanates from and appeals to the understanding. We thus emerge from the confines of instinct and enter the province of reason. Music, devoid of harmony, is as old as

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humanity, but its evolution into a fine art demanded and depended upon the assistance of a science—the harmonic element. In order to avoid confusion it must be understood that harmony—in the musical interpretation of the term—does not refer to the orderly unification of many parts into a complex musical structure; harmony solves the problem of combining many simultaneously sounding tones into sound-complexes, called chords, and regulates their employment. These chords are divided into consonances and dissonances; the former please, while the latter irritate our sensibilities. Dissonances expressed with intensity arouse in us a craving for the return of the consonances.

Acoustics—the science of sound—teaches that a musical tone is not a single but a complex phenomenon consisting of many units vibrating simultaneously. These partial or overtones are responsible for its timbre or its tone color. When a tone is sounded in combination with its third and fifth overtones, a sound-complex results free from all foreign elements because its constituents are contained in the ground tone. Hence a consonance is really a ground tone amplified by some of its constituents. In the dissonance this perfect affinity is lacking, and it owes its discordant character to the disparity of its members.

Prior to the advent of harmony all musical expression was by necessity confined to melody. Such music could and did lend significant form to simple musical ideas. But where harmonies are lacking, a certain vagueness, both of direction and color, appears. Because any single tone may belong to many modes, both major and minor, an element of indefiniteness is inherent in an unsupported melody; and it may be assumed that harmony, at least in its plainer forms, is born of a growing craving for greater stability. Even at its simplest, harmony not only provides for a colorful background and greater sonorousness, but also establishes that

all important element of positiveness which guides the melodic flow and supports its structure.

Such a simple harmonious treatment of a melody must not be underestimated, both as a technical device of great value and as a source of aesthetic enjoyment, but the greatest service rendered by the science of harmony is to be found in the laws of counterpoint, to which we are indebted for the grandeur of polyphonic music.

Just as those countless possibilities of combining single tones in succession have yielded a host of wonderful melodies, so polyphony provides a means for coördinating melodies into a musical structure capable of portraying many related, or even diverse, feelings simultaneously. Thus a complex mood, a group feeling, for instance, may be significantly and adequately expressed in tones. In spite of its complexity, such music can be intuitively apprehended in its totality. In view of the elaborate form and intricate construction of a symphonic poem, it is evident that nothing less than a science can prevent a chaos of sound-complexities, and insure a unity capable of giving great musical ideas expressive of the vast and ever-flowing inner life. Harmony has successfully elevated music from the level of simple folksong to the lofty plane of art. But how is it possible for the composer to express himself freely when harmony with its many laws hems him in on all sides? This question reflects a mistaken idea of the nature of harmony. Harmony is by no means a system of musical arithmetic decreeing what is right and what is wrong. The laws of such a cold science could be expediently applied in a mechanical universe, but they would be certain to inhibit spontaneity of expression, and, therefore, be useless in the field of art. If music were nothing more than a combination of tones arranged according to strict law, the elaboration of a simple melody into a great tone-structure would be but a matter of accuracy and patience. Such a

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science is avoided instinctively because of its abstractness and artificiality. From such music as has stood the test of time men of insight and patience have selected what it held in common; and out of the sum and substance of these findings a set of laws has been formulated. This system, known as the science of harmony, is rightly judged to embody essential restraints to be put on creative work. Harmony has not been created for genius but by him, to guide and guard those who lack his intuitive wisdom. While it is a straight jacket to the half-trained, it is to the skilled composer a key to his problems—whether a composition is simple or complex, serene or passionate, the musical idea must ever remain supreme and guide the constant flow of consonance and dissonance. The useful combinations of harmony are not merely scientifically constructed sound-complexes, to be played with by skilled theorists; on the contrary, they give orderly expression to the flow of joy and grief, elation and depression, courage and despair. When inspiration opens the flood-gates of man's soul, reflection must govern his agitation. Only with the aid of laws can he express himself fully. Consonance and dissonance will then flow in true affinity with the kaleidoscopic motion of his inner life, and, from the union of the Dionysian with the Apollonian music, there will be born a music worthy to be ranked as an art.

MUSICAL FORMS

A comprehensive and thorough aesthetic consideration of musical forms is almost impossible without an accompanying theoretical analysis of their construction and an historical introduction, descriptive of their origin and development. Since such a treatise would fill many volumes, a brief survey must suffice.

Musical forms differ from those of flat surfaces and plastic objects, which exist in space for eye and touch, in that they

are neither two- nor three-dimensional; they are temporal manifestations perceived by the ear and must be presented as temporal forms. Because moods differ in character their tonal expression demands diverse forms. It is through these forms that their individuality is realized. Song and dance, separate or combined (dance-song), are as old as the human race and are its common property. Through text and rhythm they readily display their meaning and purpose as well as their aesthetic values. These familiar forms shall then serve for a background, and our brief dissertation may begin with the *rondo*—an important representative of the classical forms.

The *rondeau*, a dance-song of medieval times, is to be regarded as the prototype of the instrumental rondo, which shows a marked formal development when compared with simpler forms. It consists of one or more melodies interrelated, but devoid of centralized organization. The rondo exhibits a principal melody succeeded by one or more lesser strains; these satellites are conscious of their subordinate rank and ever ready to withdraw at the reentry of their chief. Thus the cyclic form is established, and in this cyclic motion lies the key to the aesthetic problem. The rondo represents a musical idea of sufficient vitality to engender its interpreters. These it projects and reabsorbs at will. It is a vision, the radiance of which brings forth fainter pictures, which by their alternate emergence and submergence embellish and revitalize the source whence they issued.¹

The classical forms reach their highest development in the *sonata*. This type owes its superiority to the introduction of the "thematic development." Two motives—melodies of marked individuality—are sectionally developed until their melodic qualities are fully demonstrated; then they are com-

¹ A substitution of terms will greatly clarify this definition. It must be remembered that music is a time art; and such terms as projection and reabsorption, emergence and submergence, may readily be exchanged for waxing and waning, presence and absence, advancing and retiring.

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bined and opposed to each other, in order to establish their affinity. After this crucial test, which is carried out with great ingenuity and tenacity, they are restored to their original position and are reintroduced as competent and congenial partners.

Thus each section in the sonata is strictly organized, but there seems to be no rigid law to limit their number. Some sonatas have only three, and others as many as five parts; on an average there are three.

These movements, as they are termed, are more or less independent compositions, which adequately give their ideal contents, but since they individually represent the sections of one and the same elaborate musical idea; they are by necessity interrelated within an harmonious tone-structure.

Because thinking and feeling are but two phases of one complex faculty the interpretation of a melody offers an alluring temptation readily yielded to—a genuine part of aesthetic pleasure, but entirely subjective and hence without general validity. Two characteristic melodies, however, may be legitimately compared and contrasted, and their affinity or disparity may be firmly established. The two motives which have been introduced as congenial partners are such because of their affinity; while the one is of a staunch nature, the other represents the softer, lyric element; thus they complement each other and serve to express many nuances of feeling.

Although each section of the sonata presents a comprehensible unity—a definite picture—it is, nevertheless, only a section of the whole, and the consummate beauty of the composition is not revealed until it is contemplated in its entirety.

The diverse parts must be combined, contrasted, and compared until their individual character as well as their interrelations are discovered. Then the underlying principle—the creative idea—which forms, governs, and unites the parts

will reveal itself as an uninterrupted and ever-changing psychic stream. A simple idea may be expressed in a simple way, but elaborate ideas demand forms of great extension and flexibility. Just as the function develops the organ, so the form must expand with the growth of an idea. The several sections of a sonata, different in character and yet inter-related are such by no accident or theoretical design; they have been evolved through the pressure of necessity.

A careful scrutiny of the form may lead to a correct understanding of its meaning and its purpose. In the typical sonata an energetic beginning is followed by a period of tranquillity, which is succeeded by a third section of a vivacious character. Just so a vigorous mood is apt to spend its surplus vitality in a forceful fashion before it relaxes to a tranquil flow; this second phase may be regarded as a temporary reduction of intensity, and is to be followed by a period of exuberance, which brings the agitation to a close.

While such a mood can be interpreted in a thousand ways, an analogy may be helpful. We ascend a mountain vigorously, expectant of many things; our efforts are rewarded by the view; having enjoyed this period of serene contemplation, we descend refreshed in body and spirit.

The sonata form owes much of its excellence to the fact it embraces many lesser forms, such as *canon*, *fugue*, and *variation*.

In the canon a melody is strictly imitated according to rule by two or more performers. Since imitation precludes disparity of ideas, the aesthetic meaning of the canon is at once clear—it is agreement ranging from quick acquiescence to vigorous approval, according to the character of the melody. Because of this the canon is generally employed for emphasis and intensification.

In the fugue imitation reaches perfection—one motive is alternately presented by several performers and supported by companion melodies—counterpoint, so called. From a

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simple beginning an intricate and elaborate structure is evolved, gathering force as it grows. The aesthetic effect lies in its intensity and its dynamic character. The fugue expresses tension and force and seems to portray dramatic episodes.

The variation, by means of rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic modification, develops all the latent virtues of a simple but futile motive and presents it in various garbs without destroying its identity—like a spirit which manifests itself in many forms. So an idea may be presented in many of its phases. Organic unity, a wealth of colors, and an ever-changing surface constitute the charm of this form; and because of these qualities it is peculiarly fitted to express complex moods—the gentlest tremor and the most ardent burst of passion.

Firmly organized yet flexible, composed of many lesser forms, the sonata is the form of forms, capable of conveying the greatest musical ideas, as expressed in *chamber music*, *overture*, and *symphony*.

The difference between classical and romantic forms lies in the greater freedom enjoyed by the latter. Romantic forms do not express different feelings; they express feelings differently. A central idea is developed in the former; in the latter feelings may be given in their flow.

An *improvisation* is a product of the free play of phantasy pictures—an uninterrupted flow of feelings as they rise to the surface. *Rhapsody*, as its name implies, is a tone-structure in which folksongs and dances, elaborately embroidered, are loosely held together.²

The *nocturne* is suggestive of the mysteries of the night, suppressed moods, subdued colors.

While the *berceuse* and the *barcarole* represent different subjects in poetry, it is difficult, if not impossible to distinguish between them in music. The gentle rocking of the

² Brahms' rhapsodies are closer to the ballade type.

cradle and the smooth gliding of the boat are musically suggested by the same quiet rise and fall of a melody and the steady monotonous rhythm which governs these compositions.

The modern instrumental *romance*, a form of indefinite character, carries the sentimental; the *ballade* (originally medieval dancing) gives voice to the imaginative elements of love and adoration, and may rise to epic heights. The instrumental ballade may be classed with program music like the concert overture. According to Wagner the operatic overture is an "ideal prologue" which serves to create a greater familiarity with the succeeding drama through a preliminary exposition of motives, by means of which the leading characters may later be identified.

Such precise delineation is not to be found in the concert overture, the prototype of the symphonic poem. These forms are intended to portray the most capricious episodes of an action.

RÉSUMÉ

The aesthetic enjoyment of art may be briefly defined as a sum and substance of our reactions; and if this definition is true, it is valid for all art. In music, however, there is much of the mysterious, which defies analysis and logical interpretations.

It is not the purpose of the science of aesthetics to formulate rigid rules by which the composer may be guided and guarded in his creative labors; nor should it attempt to explain that which transcends the power of reason. The science of harmony teaches all that can be thought, but the substance of music passes all understanding.

Nevertheless, the philosophy of art has its value, and through observation and introspection much may be discovered which escapes the casual observer.

Man is accustomed to think in visual terms, but music is

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neither a two- nor a three-dimensional object which may be quietly examined; it is a most volatile substance and easily eludes us.

Since the key to a complete enjoyment of music lies in the proper approach, and understanding of its nature is essential—its origin and purpose as well as its elements and forms must be grasped. Then, and only then, is the composer's message fully apprehended and appreciated.

Like all things created by man, music has its limitations, but its charms are many. Each may enjoy its possibilities as an art, according to his gifts. There is no aesthetic law to prohibit the purely intellectual attitude of the formalist, who delights in the analysis of those intricate patterns and designs which constitute the formal element of music—for him the form is all. Nor should those be censured who require the assistance of a phantasy picture to complete their happiness. It is only the favored few, who are capable of a pure and balanced emotional reaction. Theirs is the consummate enjoyment because music is a communion on an emotional level.

NOTE: To E. A. Singer, Jr. I am indebted for an interest and a stimulation which helped me towards a crystallization of subconscious ideas and personal reactions.

I have had the greatest encouragement from the theories of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Wagner, and the Vedanta Philosophy in the working out of my ideas on the metaphysic of music.

A few titles are added for the benefit of the student who is interested in the wider cultural and psychological problems of music.
v. Hartmann, *Asthetik*, 1886

Philosophy of the Unconscious, tr.

Gelet, *From the Unconscious to the Conscious*, tr., 1920.

Volkman, *Lehrbuch der Psychologie*, 2 vols. tr. 1894.

F. T. Vischer, *Asthetik*, vol. 1, part 1, *Metaphysik des Schönen*.

Hanslik, *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen*, 1854 (formalism).

Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, tr.

H. Pfitzer, *Die Neue Aesthetik der Musikalischen Impotenz*, 1920.

Simple analysis may be found in the books on aesthetics cited in the Bibliography.

PAUL KRUMMEICH.

ADDENDA TO CHAPTER ON MUSIC

THE LIPPS THEORY

Theodor Lipps claims that "our subconscious ideas are phases of the process of our psychic agitation; that they can eventually develop into and represent our conscious ideas. Subconscious ideas are equal of conscious ideas, as far as their position and significance in the synthesis of our psychic life are concerned. As to their value, they are ideas, without, as yet, being that state-of-consciousness, which we usually call an 'idea'. . . ." Lipps means to say that a mood may develop into a thought,—that the mood is the equal of the thought as a unit of our psychic life, without, as yet, having reached that degree of lucidity, which we generally associate with a thought. Thus the mood is potentially thought and may develop into a thought.

If we can demonstrate this, our problem is solved.

All music-lovers are familiar with that peculiar feeling-reaction, which is quite devoid of intellectual illumination; and many of us have experienced the "emergence" of a phantasy-picture, so-called. Surely, a phantasy-picture is a phase of consciousness, and a thought as soon as its significance is clearly revealed to us. Thus we can safely agree with Lipps. We know that logical thoughts exist, and, I believe, it is equally true that a "logical quantity cannot emanate from an illogical source." Then moods, the "subconscious ideas" must be capable of logic and a "subconscious logic" *must* exist. Thus our "orderly" enjoyment of music is explained, and we need no longer wonder how and why we can and do enjoy music adequately without the need or desire for translating its message into logical terms. We enjoy music by intuition, and such enjoyment is as orderly and logical as intellectual apperception.

ERRATA IN CHAPTER ON MUSIC

- 196—11. 29-30 read *This phantasy eliminates groups, etc.*
197—I. 31 read *accustomed* for *unaccustomed*
216—I. 23 delete *music*
217—I. 16 read *simpler forms which consist of one, etc.*
219—I. 29 read *quiet* for *quick*
220—I. 8 read *fertile* for *futile*

PART FOUR
AESTHETIC TYPES

AESTHETIC TYPES

Art and the pleasure it gives may be thought of in two ways. It may be interpreted in general terms: as something discoverable throughout the range of human experience—in a game, a bit of organized business, religious feeling, some social amenity—and as yielding pleasure through the art in all these things. Or we may turn to the artistic impulse as it takes definite and varied form in the several arts; study it as it expresses itself in the medium and through the aims and methods of each of these arts; and read our responding pleasure always within the qualifying context of whatever art calls it forth.

Of these two ways, the first is unreservedly bad. It is true that what is called art in the narrow sense has emerged from larger practical life-interests and from vague artistic shapings of the whole stuff of experience; and that, once independent, it again finds its way into larger and vaguer life-contexts. But no aesthetics worthy of the name can stop with generalities. If it is not to become loose-lipped it must turn to fine art, seek to understand its processes, capture its substance and its spirit, taste of its creative wealth and order, and get close to its ideals and pleasures. This is the reason for the second way—an analytic study of the system of the arts.

Another problem, however, remains: that of aesthetic types. Often when we pass from painting to painting, from poem to poem we become aware of differences of purpose and effect within a general artistic effectiveness. Such differences may also be found as we pass from one art to another.

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Virgil, the sculptors of the *Laocoon*, and the painter El Greco have made creative use of the same material. The effect in the three cases is startlingly different. Peculiarities in the aim and the resources of poetry, sculpture, and painting have something to do with this—there is this much truth, at least, in Lessing's essay—but they do not explain why tragedy and pathos are so arrestingly present in the poem and the group and are all but absent in El Greco's painting. If Michelangelo had painted the picture they would have been there. The reason must lie in personal preferences and aptitudes. El Greco meant to be decorative.

Cutting across the arts and expressive of a personal bent and definite aim, are certain broad aesthetic types. Sublimity marks the genius of Aeschylus; Sappho, Catullus, and Keats are voices of grace and beauty; Whitman's poetry naturally falls within the characteristic; Tennyson is idyllic; and Byron is picturesque. There is sensuous beauty in Titian, tragedy in Michelangelo, grace in Praxiteles, pathos in Scopas, rough strength in Van Gogh, idyllic charm in Watteau, decorative appeal in Botticelli and in Gauguin. Music may be any one of these things. In single works of art, the creative impulse is seen pointed in its choice and shaping at one or the other of these types. Their meaning lies there. If it is to be grasped a careful understanding must be gained of the substance and spirit of the *beautiful*, the *characteristic*, the *sublime*, the *comic*, the *tragic*, and of *minor* types.

Again, if we pass from the work of art to the response to art, we must seek to understand appreciation in its specialized forms. Beauty of structure and beauty of language or organized sound may be discovered in the *Oedipus Rex*, in *Hamlet*, and in Chopin's *Funeral March*; but with reference to all three the exclamation: "how beautiful" would be pitifully inadequate. This is not what they mean to be; they are quintessentially tragic, and as such they grip and hold

us. They all give pleasure, it is true, but unless the specific nature of this pleasurable response is looked for and its roots in human nature are searched for, our comprehension of art and of the enjoyment it yields to him who knows its secrets will always be uncritical and shallow.

These are but two sides of one problem—the markings in art and the forces in its diversified satisfactions. It is the problem of the following chapters.

THE BEAUTIFUL

The beautiful may be used widely and loosely to mark the aesthetically effective. In its narrower sense, however,—the immediately, smoothly, and wholly pleasing—it is one of the aesthetic types, with a will and appeal of its own. Attempt after attempt has been made to get close to its quality and to understand its relations to other types. But the difficulties are many. It appears differently in the several arts and shows a perplexing variety even in a single art. People may agree as to how the term is to be used and yet retain their sharply individual preferences in their choice of objects to be called beautiful. There is also the danger of slipping into the wider aesthetic use. More insidious still is the temptation to take the term over into the realm of metaphysics, away from art, into a mystical and spreading light. Plato is guilty of this; so are Hegel and Schopenhauer in so far as they force beauty within the general formula of their systems. It must be enchanting to sit on the metaphysical branch of the tree of life and to utter the clear-throated, commanding notes of a world-song of beauty, but I prefer a humbler position on the ground, and the less pretentious task of keeping the beautiful close to art—and of seeking a modulated understanding of what it means there and in our common aesthetic responses. Even such a task is none too easy.

The beautiful appears in art as: *sensuous beauty*, *beauty of form*, and *beauty of meaning-in-form*.

SENSUOUS BEAUTY

The beautiful is somewhat loosely applied to simple sensuous material as yet unformed: to a patch of color or a

single note. In such cases little more can be done than to point to an immediate, fully satisfying pleasingness. Notes very high or low in the scale are not so pleasing as are notes within these extremes. The peculiar clang-tint given to notes of the same pitch by different musical instruments also affects the pleasingness. A piano note is more immediately and purely pleasing than a cornet note; the blare of a trumpet does not favor beauty as the clear smooth sounds of a violin or flute do; organ music inclines to sublimity by the sheer volume and swell of its sound; it is rarely beautiful. Blue is often more pleasing than brown; and robin-egg blue more pleasing than ultramarine. Certain greens are displeasing. Delicate tints are more easily worked into a beautiful whole than intense, obtrusive shades. A luminous, smooth expanse of color is closer to beauty than a muddy, harshly varied one. Line, substance, and texture show similar differences. A broad, straight or jagged line is harsher, heavier, less alive than a slender and delicate curve; plaster is dead, as marble and wood are not; velvet has a quiet and facile persuasiveness lacking in calico or linen.

Experimental studies have been made of preferences of color and line. They have revealed wide individual differences and hidden associational influences. They have shown that in what seems to be purely sensuous beauty a formative element enters: thus part of the secret of something subtly or brilliantly alive—a face, a woodland scene, an Oriental rug—is seen to rest in the opportunities given by such animated surfaces for the enjoyment of ever new relational surprises and varying patterns.

BEAUTY OF FORM

Art takes sensuous material, for its beauty or expressive strength, and gives it an organic unity in variety which is called form. In doing this it creates a new aesthetic value

or develops an implied one. In such of its works as are aimed at the beautiful as an aesthetic type the materials are wholly pleasing in their own right or they at least do not thwart a reshaping in which the workmanship is perfect and the created form satisfies completely and easily. Keats's *Ode to a Grecian Urn* is an example of the beautiful in art. There are no harsh-sounding words, no obtrusive images; there is a "linked sweetness" in the sequence of the lines; the rhythm is smooth and flowing. Within the structural scheme and blended wealth of the poem there is nothing intense or crudely aggressive which might *jump out* and disrupt the unity of tone and mood.

There is no one formula for formal beauty. There are many materials and patterns equally and differently pleasing; perfect workmanship may be shown in many ways. Keats's *To Sleep*; Swinburne's *A Match* and his second *Rondel*; many of the lyrics of Goethe; the Temple of the Nike Apteros; the Chateau de Pierrefonds; Rheims Cathedral; Correggio's *The Virgin and Child with St. Jerome*; Fragonard's *Le Chiffre d'Amour*; Manet's *The Grand Canal* and his technically very different *Fifer*—one and all are definitely aimed at beauty of form. In all of them is beauty differently compounded and held within individual organizational schemes.

What are the marks of the beautiful as it creates special values in the shaping of what is sensuously pleasing? To attempt completeness here would be folly; the most that can be done is to pass in review some of the qualities and devices most often revealed and used in such shaping.

REGULARITY

An irregular face is not beautiful; there is very little room for jagged, purposelessly varied lines in a form aimed at beauty. A regular recurrence of pleasing musical phrases

or rhythmic units, of ratios of line, of colors is sought. As soon, however, as regularity gives the impression of being mechanical or too directly desired it becomes monotonous and displeasing. If it is to serve its purpose it must suggest a spontaneous as well as an effective correlation of parts; it must admit of some measure of individuality and variety.

SYMMETRY, BALANCE

Symmetry and balance are special forms of regularity. Symmetry when used in art yields a disciplined beauty of organization through time and space correspondences and inverted bilateral repetition. Balance seeks an equilibrium which is either frankly kinetic or decorative and compositional or one of psychic weight. The façade of Rheims Cathedral is symmetrical and kinetically balanced. Many pictures, beautiful in design show a balanced arrangement of masses of color. Psychic weight is a matter of balance of interest. In a beautiful face interest in the eyes does not dominate—as it does in the face of Raphael's *Sistine Madonna*—there are balancing attractions in the forehead or in a delicately rounded cheek or chin.

PLEASING VARIETY

Art becomes ineffective—fails of beauty in the broad sense—when there is a confusing mass of unrelated detail or intricacy great enough to baffle and annoy. The beautiful in the narrow sense, as an aesthetic type, moves far within this danger point. Intricate, involved patterns and great wealth of detail it avoids. Within a comparatively simple scheme it aims at a persuasive, engaging variety. The beautiful has not the starkness and downrightness of the characteristic; it has not the emotional subtlety of the tragic and the inciting quality of the sublime; and it lacks the

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ornateness of the decorative. Sappho is never complex or obtrusive, and she is never monotonous. Words, images, rhythmical forms, meanings—they all share in a simply modulated life.

DELICACY

Many of the other types show a heavy, emphatic touch. The comic and the characteristic, for instance, are constantly underscoring. Not so the beautiful! It is delicate, light, persuasive rather than mastering. Rheims Cathedral shows delicacy worked into the least responsive or aesthetic materials; Watteau and Fragonard are delicate and light in their use of line, light and shade, patterning, and color. Renoir often turns massive forms into beautiful designs by a feathery use of color and a pervasive and finely touched play of light and shade. Van Gogh is too gaunt; Hodler, too much concerned with energy; and Cézanne, too directly structural to achieve beauty in this sense—nor is it their aim.

ANIMATION

The whole beauty of a diamond is in its *life*—in its animated, colorful reflections. Only a small part of the appeal of an impressionistic landscape is to be found in its brilliancy of color; most of it is gained from making the surfaces of nature visually alive in their changing reflections. A stolid face is never completely beautiful; it has the fatal defect of deadness. There must be life and sparkle in a painting or a poem. The individual life breathed into artistic forms differs from artist to artist, from picture to picture. Manet's *Grand Canal* and *The Longchamp Races* both have animation, but they *live* in different ways. In Fragonard's *Le Chiffre d'Amour* beauty is reached through the living play of light; Renoir gains animation in his landscapes in this way, but also by rhythms of color.

DISTINCTION

Distinction is not a quality peculiar to the beautiful; the tragic and the sublime have it, while it is lacking in the comic and the charming. The want of it in a face means a drop from the beautiful to the pretty. Distinction is a matter of quality; the pretty is pleasing and lightly valued; the beautiful is satisfying as well as pleasing, and holds us with a deeper and richer appeal. It is the finer thing. In art distinction is not easily discovered in very small things—in miniatures, for example—hence they are not so naturally called beautiful. Aristotle probably goes too far when he says that a very small object cannot be beautiful. With the principle of unity in variety in mind, he saw insufficient chance of relational interpretation and shaping. But these may be possible in a single verse or in the painting of so slight a thing as a leaf or petal.

Distinction in art is not to be confused with the grand manner. It may be the mark of a simple treatment of humble things, but only if there is a large and fine rendering. The petty and the coarse kill it. Naturalistic art seldom achieves it, for in occupying itself with details, sordid and petty, and in choosing a photographic method, it passes by the chance of a largely and deeply pleasing and arresting art—an art as fine as it is rare, and of an individual and unusual perfection of form.

INTERFLOW AND INTERGLOW OF PARTS

Perfection is something we do not expect in real life. We see it as an ideal, a hopeless step or two in advance of our performance or as something infinitely remote and unattainable. In art it can be attained; the rare moments when it appears in sensuous form in a poem or song are highly and reverently prized. In aesthetic types like the pretty, the

charming, the picturesque idea of perfection has no place. What is the part it plays in the beautiful?

The beautiful is complete and all of a piece. The unity that it has is a living unity: a common life *flows* back and forth from part to part and *glows* with a warmth and glamour in every enhanced and enhancing part. Plotinus and certain medieval writers were aware of this: the smoothness and *suavitas* they pointed to in the beautiful were nothing but the result of this *interflow*; and their *nitidas* is more than brightness or brilliance, it is a shared luminosity—an *interglow* that is the living light of the form and its parts. Interflow may be seen in the *Ilissus* and the *Hermes*, in many Gothic churches, in Rodin's *Springtime*, in Corot's landscapes and Swinburne's verse; interglow, in Shakespeare's *Sonnets*, in de Hooch's Interiors, in Keats and Shelley, in the landscapes of Sisley or Renoir.

THE BEAUTY OF MEANING-IN-FORM

All art expresses meanings through created forms. The term *meaning-in-form* is clumsy, but it serves to mark the intimate relation that exists in all good art between content and the form it is given. The *Eve* of Rodin is not merely a nude woman, it is a guilt-stricken one; this idea is worked into material and sculptural form, and through them finds a voice. Drooping melancholy becomes articulate in the imagery and rhythm of Keats's ode; youthful vigor and poise, in the *Apoxyomenos*; sheltering mother-love, in the pose of the *Niobe*; tense struggle, in the *Laocoon*; and utter abandon, in the *Drunken Silenus*.

Of meanings there is this to be said: they differ in aesthetic value in two ways; not all of them can be given form in art that is worthwhile, and not all of them favor the same aesthetic type. There are ideas and things so essentially trite or inexpressive as to foil the efforts of the most gifted artist.

No imaginative attempt can redeem them. Others that are aesthetically worthwhile may more naturally take form in the comic, the tragic, or the sublime—in types other than the beautiful.

A form must be studied in relation to the meaning it defines and expresses; and *meaning-in-form* must be referred to the artist's purpose. A tragedy or an elegy may have great beauty of language and structure, but these beauties are incidental; what is willed is the vibrational setting forth of spiritual clashes, of feeling, of moods. It is this, the spirit breathing in the form, that must not be missed—and this spirit need not fall within the single type of the beautiful.

Here are three poetic pictures from the *Agamemnon*. Each is art at its highest: flawless in workmanship, imaginative and compelling. Not one of them is aimed at beauty.

The first refers to the sacrifice of Iphigenia:

And as she let fall to the ground the saffron dye, she smote each of her sacrificers with a piteous glance from the eye; and she lay beautiful as in a picture, wishing to speak, for oft in her father's hospitable walls she had sung, and a pure virgin with her chaste voice she had lovingly honored her dear father's thrice-blessed joyous life.

The second is a vision of war:

And Ares the broker who deals in human bodies, and holds the scales in the contest of the spear, is sending home from Troy to the friends the sad dust burnt in the fire, wept with tears, loading the urns with well-packed ashes in the place of men.

The third gives a picture of the army camped before Troy:

—for our beds were before the very walls of the enemy, and the meadow-dews distilled from heaven and from the earth, a constant destruction to our garments, making our hair like that of beasts.

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And should I tell of the bird-slaying winter, what an unbearable one the snow of Ida brought us, or the heat, when the sea in its windless midday bed fell waveless to sleep;—but why lament all this; the labor is past.

Whatever beauty these passages have is merely incidental; their main aesthetic purpose lies elsewhere. The first means to be pathetic; the second, tragic; the third combines the elegiac and the decorative. In all three instances we are carried beyond imagery and formal structure to meanings which no form can adequately contain. Feelings are stirred; imagination is roused and sent off into cosmic problems. Phrases like *chrysamoibos Ares* and *bird-slaying winter* are marvelous, they conjure unforgettable pictures; but whoever sees only the picture misses their greatest quality, that of emotional intensity and imaginative force. A phrase like *star-inwrought* is within the beautiful; there we can rest within the image—nothing carries us beyond. Not so with the others; they force us into the pathetic and the tragic with their shaking and spreading suggestiveness.

It may be said then that beauty of meaning-in-form is sought and gained when materials immediately and wholly pleasing are given perfect form; and when the meanings embodied in these sensuously satisfying forms are such as allow a resting within the charmed circle, which is not broken at any point by too intense an emotion or too propellent an imagination.

Here lies the clue to what the beautiful ultimately means in its contrast to the other aesthetic types still to be considered.

THE CHARACTERISTIC

Beauty in the narrower sense—pleasing colors, clear sounds, curves, and their smooth, satisfying relations—exhausts neither the meaning nor the purpose of art. There is a distinct aesthetic type, the characteristic, which either makes for a larger, more expressive beauty or contests with the beautiful the title of supremacy in art—a struggle marked by the introduction of repulsive materials, by shattered harmonies of line or sound, by troubled and disconcerting meanings.

It has become the fashion to trace in art and aesthetic theory alike a gradual turning away from the beautiful to the characteristic. This claim seems to be borne out by the fact that (1) the term beautiful has undergone an expansion which carries it into realms—the symbolic, the sublime, the ugly—held at one time to be beyond the frontiers of the aesthetic; (2) a not to be neglected group of radical artists, the expressionists, set themselves a task quite other than the rendering of beauty; (3) even conservative artists have been forced into a bolder and harsher use of materials and methods.

THE NATURE OF THE CHARACTERISTIC

What is meant by the characteristic? The term is often used interchangeably with two others: the significant and the expressive. It is mostly a matter of shading: the characteristic refers more directly to destructive opposition to beauty, truth to type, and sharp individualizing of impressions; the significant, to the association complexes we call

meanings; the expressive, to certain suggestive, provoking, and stimulating qualities of colors and lines and their combinations.

The characteristic implies (1) a peculiar technique, (2) the choice of certain materials ordinarily thrown aside as unsuitable, (3) peculiar relational activities.

The technique is one of rough brush strokes, bold daubs of color, short, straight lines, sharp angles, harsh sounds, asymmetrical arrangements in architecture, discords in music. The result is an art of striking, emphatic, tensional impressions: an art which instead of insinuating itself into our graces does enjoyable violence to our senses. Walt Whitman in poetry, Van Gogh in painting, and Rodin in portrait sculpture are artists of this sort. The effect may be a stinging strength not destructive of beauty—such it is in Browning's best work—or it may be an extreme distorting of impressions—Van Gogh's breaking telegraph poles, Cézanne's lop-sided houses, Matisse's dancers, the crazy geometry of cubist heads, the expressionistic technique of a Hasenclever or a Waldo Frank, which by a sudden switching on and off of lights, a merging of the self and the universe, and the ascription of a jerky mobility to everything produces smarting eyes, psychical chaos, and a cosmic *malaise* commonly rejected are utilized.

When Cézanne makes oranges angular or when Hodler takes the slight curves out of a young girl's body and makes its outlines stiff and harsh, it is all a matter of technique. The material selected was pleasing and beautiful in the narrower sense; for purposes of his own the artist has reshaped it in the direction of the strong, the harsh, the incisive, the challenging. But there are materials which invite, or in fact demand such a technique. There is not much room for pleasing curves in the face of a Lincoln or in a Christ on the Cross. When Rodin chooses an old, shrivelled body, as he does in *La Vieille Heaulmière*, his selection means a

peril and a definite and peculiar opportunity. The theme is disillusionment; the material, revolting; the technique, brutal. It is a bold stroke—in the soft, pleasing art of *Springtime* Rodin plays for lesser stakes. An extreme instance of stark ugliness of material is Walt Whitman's *I Sing of the Body Electric*, with its repellent anatomical details. It is useless to judge such work in terms of beauty. It means something else to the artist, it ought to mean something else to us. With all such material the redemption is partly technical—a masterful virility—and partly imaginative—a broadened and intensified reading of life.

There is, again, the relation of a rendering, or image, to (1) the thing represented or our construct of it, (2) the type, (3) a system of images and meanings, (4) human life and its values. The terms expressive and characteristic apply most directly to the first two; the term significant, to the last two. (1) On seeing a full length portrait of a friend, we exclaim: "How expressive the face! How characteristic the pose!" The original is evidently in our mind. (2) We look at the portrait of an Old Man by Lucas Cranach or at Rembrandt's etching of his Mother and interpret them as studies in the characteristic. Why? We know neither of the originals, but we have often seen people like them. They suggest types of aging. The very script and sign of that aging, as it marks the lower part of the face, has been revealed by the painters—the mechanical pressing together of the lips by Cranach and the slackening of lines and trembling infirmity of mouth and chin—old age caught off its guard—by Rembrandt. In animal sculpture we demand, in addition to life-likeness, truth to type; we look for the litheness of the panther or the grotesque lines and lumbering movements of the hippopotamus. (3) Suppose I say of a line in a poem or a scene in a play, "How expressive! How significant!" I am clearly marking the large part played by scene or line in those wholes of

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images and meanings which I call poem or play, but I may also allude (4) to that larger whole of relations and meanings which I call life. Hamlet's and Faust's soliloquies are clues to character and moments in a dramatic action, but they are more than that: they stir thoughts and rouse feelings as deep as life itself, and reveal man as a passionate seeker, a puzzler, a wrestler with the cosmic odds against him. In this sense, significant art makes the doors of experience swing on their hinges and open out on the mystery of things.

THE ENJOYMENT OF THE CHARACTERISTIC

Why do we enjoy the characteristic—an aesthetic type which contrasts so sharply with the beautiful? The problem may be best approached from the side of formal beauty. Beauty implies soothing, restful effects, a resting in the image, and a weakened sense of actuality. Of these the first needs no comment other than the appeal to common experience. As regards the second, sheer beauty of sound or color or form holds us and yields a haunting and satisfying pleasure. Even the slightest sketch of a Leonardo, a Boucher or a Fragonard has a beauty and a charm of line that does not allow us to consider it incomplete or invite to its completion; a water-color of delicate beauty does not admit the thought that a painting in oil could give a deeper and richer semblance of the object. In view of the "mixed" character of ordinary experiences and the rare emergence of the utterly beautiful from the varied and straining forces of nature, it is small wonder that the formal beauty of art appears to us a charmed circle into which what is dangerous and oppressive cannot step.

All this is reversed in the field of the characteristic. There is no question of soothing effects. The characteristic, in its extreme forms, strikes into us like a chill and grips us like

a fever. Short of that, it stimulates, excites, unsettles. It does violence to our feeling for harmony, outrages our sense of decorum, and is a challenge flung at our peace of mind. Nor is there a resting in the image. Back of the drawings of Blake and the sculpture of Rodin; of the drab picture of Ibsen's *Ghosts* or Tolstoy's *Power of Darkness*, of the physiology of Whitman's *Songs of Adam* are cosmic visions and cosmic ideas: of stress, of heredity, of natural law, of the breeding of men. Back of the distortions of expressionistic art—from Matisse to Kandinsky or Epstein—is the surging of a chaotic subconsciousness. There is no charmed circle: the actual world breaks in everywhere—strong, rough, ugly, sinister, as the case may be.

The secret of our appreciation of the characteristic lies in a twofold tensional adjustment: clashing elements must be fitted together within a work of art; and that work of art must be harmonized with our "will to beauty." Instead of curves that melt into each other there are short, brusque lines, with an angry tilt to them; there are warring sounds and strained metres; there are aggressive colors that smash into an orderly color scheme. The task of unifying such material tests our mettle, and the victory is never quite complete. Even less complete and hence more tensional is the second attempted adjustment. The "will to beauty" reflects, in part at least, the attempt to rebuild the world closer to our heart's desire. Disquieting, jarring things are cast aside; the ground is cleared. The artist in the characteristic undoes all this; he reawakens our sense of actuality and litters our steps with cosmic débris. In real life the slouching walk, the pasty complexion, and the twitching lips of a drug fiend form a picture which clashes with too complacent a view of things. Make of him material for art, and there is forced within the circle of aesthetic enjoyment something bitter and recalcitrant. The "will to art" lifts

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the material to the aesthetic level; the "will to beauty" cannot completely adjust itself to material that is straining away from it: the result is an enjoyable tension.

Enjoyable? in what sense and for what reasons? First in the list of the pleasures of the characteristic is *the pleasure of mastering*. This is not so much a matter of achievement as it is of a heightened sense of power. To be able to look at a drug fiend in terms of art is in itself a source of such pleasure; so is the organization of colors and masses that threaten to break loose. There is *the pleasure of tensing ourselves*. Much has been said of the pleasures of relaxation, but any athlete knows the intense enjoyment of tensed muscles and any intellectual worker that of a braced mind and an alert attention. Our attitude toward the characteristic is tensional and furnishes pleasures of this sort. There follow *the pleasures of intensified and broadened experience*. A play like O'Neill's *The Hairy Ape*, made up as it is of the pungent and bitter stuff of life, yields a pleasure that borders on pain—a sense of being keenly alive and of reaching into the tortured recesses of consciousness. Or take this passage from Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself*:—

The blab of the pave, tires of carts, sluff of boot-soles, talk of the
promenaders,
The heavy omnibus, the driver with his interrogating thumb, the
clank of the shod horses on the granite floor,
The snow-sleighs, clinking, shouted jokes, pelts of snow-balls,
The hurrahs for popular favorites, the fury of rous'd mobs,
The flap of the curtain'd litter, a sick man inside borne to the
hospital,
The meeting of enemies, the sudden oath, the blows and fall,
The excited crowd, the policeman with his star quickly working
his passage to the centre of the crowd,
The impassive stones that receive and return so many echoes,
What groans of over-fed or half-starv'd who fall sunstruck or in
fits,

What exclamations of women taken suddenly who hurry home and
give birth to babes,
What living and buried speech is always vibrating here, what howls
restrained by decorum,
Arrests of criminals, slights, adulterous offers made, acceptances,
rejections with convex lips,
I mind them or the show or resonance of them—I come and I
depart.

A welter of images! the turmoil of life! noisome ingredients!
Here are an eye and an ear that catch the very spirit of
city life with a quivering intensity; here is an imagination
that ranges over fair and foul alike. In this intense and
broadened reading of life we sympathetically share. The
fourth pleasure is that of *biting into things*. The analogy
is a humble one from the realm of eating. We enjoy sink-
ing our teeth into something hard and crisp; the soft and
all too yielding is not to our taste. In the characteristic
there are a strength and coarseness of fibre and a gritty ad-
mixture that we enjoy.

THE USES OF THE CHARACTERISTIC

In early art the characteristic stands out sharply, but
there is a strange thing about its use. Whether the art be
Mexican, Assyrian or East Indian, the linear patterns, the
hammered work, gem settings, textiles, glazed trinkets and
amulets reveal a "will to beauty." The two striking ex-
ceptions are music and dancing. Flower forms such as the
lotus or the rose and animal forms such as the crane, the
lizard, and the beetle, pleasing in themselves, are decoratively
shaped toward greater beauty. In their schematization the
characteristic fades out. In the *Wild Boar* of Altamira
there is apparent a delight in the life-like rendering of
sharply characterized shape and movement, but there is also
a manifest pleasure in the beauty of sweeping and tapering

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lines and delicate shading. The same is true of the *Golden Cups of Vaphio* and the Mycenaean dagger, depicting a lion-hunt. When, however, early art turns to the portrayal of men and gods it is under the sign of the characteristic, usually in its more grotesque forms. Examples are: the hideously fat *Venus* found in Austria, the African drawings of men and women, the Cretan *Vase of Reapers*, the Mexican God Quetzalcoatl, the Hindu god Siva, and the *Nike of Delos*. It is not sufficient to say that these misshapen humans embody a primitive ideal of personal beauty, for there is conscious exaggeration, often along the line of the sexual. In such instances the aesthetic ideal of woman has not yet become differentiated from the sex ideal. When the exaggeration is not sexual, as in the clay vessels of Peru and old Swedish rock carvings, (large eyes and mouth, ridiculously short bodies, feet that look like rakes, huge hands), part of the explanation is to be found in certain religious beliefs, part in a naive technique dealing with difficult human material, part in a delight in human grotesquerie. Again, the visual representation of gods and goddesses reflects a crude world with the ugly and the terrifying always close at hand, and a crude symbolism. The gods of myth-making man came by their beauty even later than they came by their goodness.

In modern art there is much deliberate use of the characteristic. Conservatives insist that it means disordered vision, emotional perversions, inability to render form, pose, egotism, *réclame*. There may be such a taint in individual cases, but there is much to be said in favor of even an extreme use of the characteristic. It is in response to healthy impulses that art freshens itself by experiment and turns to a tonic of bitter taste. The experimentation may produce nightmare shapes, but these often mark the transition to new themes and undreamed of values. Think of Whitman's vision of the diverse American scene, Carl Sandburg's

Poems of Steel, Pennell's etchings of shipyards, Meunier's sculptured miners and factory workers, revolutionary expressionistic stage settings! The difficulties of material and technique alike act as a tonic and strengthener of art. The man who contends that the sole concern of art is with the narrow rose-strewn path of beauty is like the old lady who wished geraniums planted along the rim of the Grand Canyon to have it less desolate. Art is, after all, a reflection of life. If it is not to die of a languid aestheticism, it must occasionally turn to the harsh, the acrid, the poignant, the ugly. It then acquires a gaunt strength and a hard-fistedness; to give it that strength is the mission of the characteristic.

It may seem strange to find that the characteristic plays a small part in purely naturalistic art. Naturalism in its extremest forms, it is true, makes use of repulsive material and employs a technique marked by vigor, harshness, and starkness. But it lacks what is always present when there is a bold and extensive use of the characteristic:—the motif of idealization. This motif can be traced in primitive sculpture and in modern expressionistic art. Very little of the oldest, and even less of the newest art is naturalistic in inspiration and manner of rendering.

This idealization shows itself through distortion—a deliberate moving away from natural appearance. The distortion is idealistic in purpose in one or all of three ways.

First, objects are reshaped for the sake of creating forms which are more purely and insistently expressive. This is done by simplifying; by exaggerated stress on this or that quality; by the use of force-lines; and by tensional energy in the arrangement of compositional values. Grigorieff's¹ portraits deviate from the natural, and they have about them a great expressiveness and forcefulness. Expressive simpli-

¹ The works of art referred to may be seen in Cheney's *Primer of Modern Art*.

fication at the cost of lifelikeness marks Derain's *Italian Woman*, Pechstein's *Woman with the Cat*, Van Dongen's *Portrait*, Walt Kuhn's *Caucus*, Barlach's figures of old men done in wood—and creates new values in art. Force-lines are seen in extreme dominance in Pechstein's *Boat*; Barlach's *Panel*; and in Hodler, Marc, and Soutine. Tensional organization is revealed in the art of Cézanne, Maillol, Whitman, Vachel Lindsay, and Grigorieff.

The second use of the characteristic in modern art is in extending the range of materials utilized and of organized and significant forms without the heavy price paid by extreme naturalism of a loss in imaginative force. Sandburg is not a naturalistic poet. Even when he moves closest to crudely expressive, common speech and crass actuality he is saved from prosiness by the creative virility and sweep of his imagination. The expressionistic drama in no sense aims at normal beauty. It does not shrink from the ugly:—Toller in *Hinkemann* takes the acrid stuff of life; and makes a searching tragedy from materials to which the common response would be ribald laughter. Modern painting seeks new effective patterns far beyond the facile pleasingness of the beautiful.

The third use is bound up with what has been called a spiritual rebirth of art. If "mixed" materials are to be moved within the task of art they must be redeemed imaginatively by original and stimulating workmanship, and by new visions. Among these visions the one that counts, as none other does, is that of the spirituality of nature—not in the old sense of a refuge and a solace, but as something which stretches sympathetic effort to the point of pain—something that lives gropingly in us and possessively in the life that lays hands on us. Painters have confessed to this mysticism; poets have voiced it; and it lives strongly in the work of Toller, Werfel, and Kaiser. Gothic conceptions of Christ were uncompromisingly spiritual. Something of a return to

their intensity is to be seen in Nolde's *Prophet*, Lehmbruck's *Mother and Child* and Mestrovic's *Mother*.

The characteristic demands a toughmindedness and a far-flung sympathy which not every one has or can summon. But to exclude it from art because one has not a taste for it is to cut down the range and dwarf the growth and meaning of art to a narrow and delicate beauty, or an amiable pleasingness.

THE SUBLIME

Nature rather than art furnishes the easiest approach to the problem of the sublime. Not only is the sublime a rarer artistic phenomenon than either the beautiful or the characteristic, but it is overwhelmingly present in nature—in the human drama and its cosmic setting. The very term hints that the response—the feeling of sublimity—is the important thing; but so commonly is this feeling provoked by certain objects and experiences that a preliminary list may be drawn up, with little danger of cavil or disagreement. Sublime are: the starry heavens; the endless stretching of the years; the expanse of the desert or the ocean; an earthquake or a tidal wave; wind driven clouds; beetling cliffs; the Grand Canyon; a lofty tower; a volcano; a storm at sea; a plunging cavalry charge with flashing sabres and thunder of hoofs; a blast furnace; a sunrise; some great human achievement or sacrifice; an exceptionally noble purpose; a blast from the hell of human desires. This varied assemblage may be made to yield certain recurrent types; and they in turn may be used to open the way to the sublime in art, and to the many delicate psychological problems which are bound up with the appreciation of sublimity.

THE TYPES OF THE SUBLIME

THE SUBLIME OF SPACE

Space has been recognized by Longinus, Vischer, Volkelt, and others as one of the chief sources of the sublime. Our glance travels along the horizontal plane of desert or ocean, along the vertical plane of tower or chasm. In neither case

must it be arrested by details, such as ships or islands dotting the surface of the sea.¹ The impression must be sweeping. In that impression the imagination plays the major part: it conjures up the thought of receding horizons, distances not to be traversed, heights unscalable, and depths not to be plumbed. In the sublime of cubical space—the astronomer's worlds upon worlds—distances and dimensions are such as afford the chance of an excursional imagining with no blocking or distraction.

THE SUBLIME OF TIME

From the vantage ground of the present moment, the past and the future offer themselves as intellectual and imaginative constructs. The human significance of space lies in the motor conquest of distance and in the ordering of simultaneous impressions; that of time, in *filling* and *change*. Memory, as it stretches over a length of years, construes the past in terms of what has happened; imagination reads the future in terms of what is likely to happen. Suppose I take a small section from my life—to-day flanked by a remembered yesterday and an anticipated to-morrow; there is nothing of sublimity there. Nor does the sublime of time appear if I take the wider time-span of my birth and death. If, however, I take a larger cycle, that of the earth—a fiery ball with a cooling surface swinging through space and time to a frozen death—or the still larger one of the making and unmaking of worlds, there is something that defies *human filling*, and the *changes* involved are beyond the grasp of man. Herein lies two-thirds of the sublime of time. Temporal extension emptied of such content is not sublime,

¹ Cf. F. T. Vischer, *Ueber das Erhabene und Komische*, S. 54:—"If the different stories of a tower are painted in different colors, or if an extensive plain presents itself as a variegated picture of cultivated lands the impression of the sublime is lacking, for every new color, every new jutting part means a new object for the eye."

even when carried to infinity. The last third is the suggestion of great power.²

THE SUBLIME OF SIZE

Great size and magnitude favor the feeling of sublimity. One of the simplest types of the sublime is the *colossal*. The Grand Canyon, a grove of giant redwoods, huge boulders, a massive mountain, the Amazon with its broad sheet of water are examples. All such objects affect us impressively by their sheer bulk in space. But they bulk largely in a different sense also: they have *grandeur* and they have *majesty*,—which means there has been an infusion of ideas of beauty and distinction. Things done on a large scale are sublime:—the massing of men and batteries on the Flanders front; the swarming migrations of early times. In both cases radical reduction of size and number means the disappearance of the sublime.

A huge city affords a sublime spectacle when caught spatially in images of tall buildings and far-flung streets; rhythmically in the pulse beat of its traffic; imaginatively in terms of range of living, concentration of power, variety and reach of purposes. Put in the place of this city a bee-hive or an ant-hill. There is the same intricate social organization, the same manifold achievement, and sharing of great tasks. Why then are bee-hive and ant-hill not sublime objects? The diminutive scale has something to do with it. But there is also the thought of their insignificance when measured in terms of human power and permanence. From their point of view the ants are performing herculean feats, from ours they are moving straws. A stick in the hand of a child may in a moment obliterate their work. The rela-

² These things are strikingly present in a passage near the end of Nietzsche's *Will to Power*. There is here the mark of momentous and baffling changes, of vast rhythms, of tremendous and exhilarating power.

tional apprehension of power then must be reckoned with even in the sublime of size.

THE SUBLIME OF POWER

The manifestation of great destructive force in nature is felt to be sublime. A cyclone, a volcanic eruption, a tidal wave, an earthquake all exhibit a power utterly beyond the control of man. Not only is there no possibility of effective interference, but there is a taxing of our senses, a reverberating rush and roar, an uprooting of ideas, which make the experience border on pain. Something like this Kant had in mind when he explained the dynamic sublime in terms of a sense of physical helplessness followed by the invigorating recoil of a feeling that we as moral beings rise above the nature that threatened to smash or engulf us; and the mathematical sublime,—the starry heavens yield his example—in terms of a feeling of sensory and intellectual bewilderment followed by a sense of mathematical mastery. In both instances he misses something. In his example of the stars he insists that they be felt simply as numberless luminous points and not as a swarm of worlds. But what of a pile of sand with its millions of grains, which patience and a long life would enable me to count. There is no sublimity here; but there is in the vast stretching of the sands of the sea. Distance and magnitude and the strain they put upon the imagination make the difference. Again, in his analysis of the dynamic sublime Kant fails to take into account the direct imaginative response to volume and rush of power and the technical mastery of nature implied in a vast irrigation project, a blast furnace or an aeroplane flight. It is not only uncontrollable power that is sublime; sublimity attaches also to great power controlled by the ingenuity of science.

This much may be said for Kant's analysis: moral power

is one of the sources of the sublime. Christ's attitude on the Cross; the strength of a Socrates or Luther; the contemplated sacrifice of the Burghers of Calais; Parkman's struggle against ill health; the soldier's dicing with death; Scott's grim losing polar fight as recorded in his diary—these are illustrations.

MINOR TYPES OF THE SUBLIME

THE WILD; THE CHAOTIC: These must be grouped together and moved close to the sublime of power. The wild suggests uncontrolled power, and the chaotic, disruption—smashing up. A mountain torrent is an example of the first; a crevasse-scarred glacier or a boulder-strewn mountain-side of the second. Why then are these to be given a separate place? It is because there is another imaginative appeal. The tumbling wildness of the *cirques* and crags of Glacier Park, as seen from a trail, is sublime apart from the thought of early upheavals and moving masses of ice. It is true, however, that a *cosmic reference*, in terms of immensity of time and space, of significance or of power, tends to intensify the feeling of sublimity.

THE MYSTERIOUS; THE WEIRD: The sea and the forest; Northern lights; birth and death; certain spiritualist phenomena yield a sense of mystery; weird effects are produced by wandering lights in a fog, by the darkneses and luminosities of a moorland; by a queer stillness broken into by the sougning of the wind, the call of an owl, the baying of a hound. In all such cases there is a sense of the strange, the unexplained, the portentous. The imagination is irresistibly carried beyond the sense-impression and plunged either into cosmic problems—as in the mystery of death—or into a mass of objectless and spreading fears.

THE GLOOMY; THE DREARY; THE BLEAK: An example of the first is a pine forest at night; of the second, a

stretch of waste land; of the third, the Straits of Magellan. Darkness has long been recognized as a possible source of the sublime. Longinus comments on it, and Homer and Dante use it effectively. Gloom is often oppressive; we sense danger and cannot set ourselves to meet it. But there are two compensatory factors in the situation: the fear is objectless and diffused, and there is the exhilaration of a ranging imagination. In the dreary and the bleak, fear is absent, but there is a sense of remoteness and strangeness, and a one-tone scheme of imagining; which must, however, be on a large scale.

THE FANTASTICALLY MISSHAPEN: Not everything that is misshapen is sublime. A hare-lip, a goitre, a club-foot do not give that impression. Sympathy with the sufferer can hardly be offered as a reason, for if this sympathy is removed the effect is comic rather than sublime. Is it then because our imagination is not stirred; because we cannot get away from this or that precise distortion? A battered hulk of a ship or the storm-twisted cedars of Monterey are sublime; there we are carried to the force of sea and wind. What then of the battered face of a boxer or the bent back of a peasant? The idea of distorting power is present there also, but I suspect it is the very definiteness of that power—a smashing fist or a burden of wood—which does not allow a feeling of sublimity to arise.

THESE TYPES OF THE SUBLIME MAY BE MATCHED IN ART

THE SUBLIME OF SPACE

Byron, *Cain*, Act 3

Oh, thou beautiful

And unimaginable ether! and

Ye multiplying masses of increased

And still increasing lights! what are ye? what

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Is this blue wilderness of interminable
 Air, where ye roll along, as I have seen
 The leaves along the limpid streams of Eden?
 Is your course measured for ye? Or do ye
 Sweep on in your unbounded revelry
 Through an aerial universe of endless
 Expansion—at which my soul aches to think—
 Intoxicated with eternity?

Byron, *Heaven and Earth*, Sc. 3

Milton, *Paradise Lost*

Book of Job

Swinburne, *On the Verge*

Cathedral spires and interiors

Byron, *Cain*, Act 3

The dead,
 The immortal, the unbounded, the omnipotent,
 The overpowering mysteries of space—
 The innumerable worlds that were and are—
 A whirlwind of such overwhelming things,
 Suns, moons, earths, upon their loud-voiced spheres
 Singing in thunder round me, as have made me
 Unfit for mortal converse:

THE SUBLIME OF TIME

Swinburne, *The Triumph of Time*

Byron, *Cain*, Act 3, Sc. 2

The mind then hath capacity of time,
 And measures it by that which it beholds,
 Pleasing or painful; little or almighty.
 I had beheld the immemorial works
 Of endless beings; skirr'd extinguish'd worlds;
 And, gazing on eternity, methought
 I had borrow'd more by a few drops of ages
 From its immensity: but now I feel
 My littleness again. Well said the spirit
 That I was nothing!

THE SUBLIME OF SIZE

Byron *Cain*, Act 2, Sc. 2

How silent and how vast are these dim worlds!
 For they seem more than one, and yet more peopled
 Than the huge brilliant luminous orbs which swung
 So thickly in the upper air, that I
 Had deem'd them rather the bright populace
 Of some all unimaginable Heaven,
 Than things to be inhabited themselves,
 But that on drawing near them I beheld
 Their swelling into palpable immensity
 Of matter, which seem'd made for life to dwell on,
 Rather than life itself.

The Pyramids; the Colossus of Rhodes; a many-voiced choric
 composition

The fall of Ares in the *Iliad* (Bk. XXI)

THE SUBLIME OF POWER

A shattering crescendo in music

King Lear

Michelangelo's *Last Judgment*

The closing verses of the *Prometheus Bound*

Homer, *Iliad* (XIV), simile of the storm

Iliad (XXXI), the deep-eddying river overwhelming
 Achilles "and rushed in tumult on Achilles, raging from
 on high, thundering with foam and blood and bodies of
 dead men."

MINOR TYPES OF THE SUBLIME

The wild, the chaotic

The battle scenes in the *Iliad*

The jealousy of Othello

The tempest in *King Lear*

The mysterious, the weird

The statue in *Don Juan*

The giant figures in Butler's *Erewhon*

Macabre music

Sound and lights in Dante's *Inferno*

Blake's drawings

The gloomy, the dreary, the bleak

Dante *Inferno*, Canto IV

True it is, that I found myself on the verge of the valley of the woeful abyss that gathers in thunder of infinite wailings. Dark, profound it was, and cloudy, so that though I fixed my sight on the bottom I did not discern anything there.

Dante *Inferno*, Canto XXVIII

And one who had both hands lopped off, lifting the stumps through the murky air so that the blood made his face foul, cried out . . .

The fantastically misshapen

The drawings of Rops and Klinger; the character of Caliban.

THE SUBLIME AS AN AESTHETIC TYPE

The sublime in art is the result partly of the choice of certain natural materials: ocean, desert, mountain, darkness, pomp, power; partly of the use of a certain technique. The materials are either actually built into the work of art or are suggested in terms of imagery, visual devices, and motor experiences. Thus huge size marks the Temple of Ammon at Karnak and the Zeus of Phidias; gloomy coloring many of the paintings of Rembrandt; bulging muscles the sculptured figures of Michelangelo and Rodin; great volume and vibrational intensity the music of Wagner. If this were all, the range of the sublime in art would be a narrow one, and arts like poetry and painting would be seriously handicapped; only a small part of what is sub-

lime in nature can be carried over bodily into architecture, sculpture, and music; mountain and desert exist in poetry only in the form of word-symbols and their imaginative values, and in painting, only as color-symbols and their imaginative stretching. Even the architect and the sculptor must rely on something besides the actual height of a spire, or spread of masses of stone, or the bulk of a Zeus in marble. There must be splendor and grandeur of treatment; and a tensional appeal to the imaginative and motor activities of the onlooker. By the skilful use of light and darkness, the multiplying of court spaces and columns, a temple grows beyond its actual size,³ sweeping lines force us to carry spires into clouds; the Zeus of Phidias grows under our eyes until we see in him the vast arbiter of human destinies, the boundless sky, and the shattering thunderbolt.

With the beautiful the sublime has hardly anything in common. It lacks the clear-cut, reposeful, self-sufficient nature of the response to beautiful objects. With the characteristic it shares the quality of not resting in the image and the admixture of stress and pain, but it has an exhilarating effect all its own. With the tragic it shares emotional intensity and imaginative suggestiveness; like the comic it uses exaggeration; not, however, to belittle but to aggrandize.

THE MARKS OF THE SUBLIME

Suppose an artist has successfully aimed at the sublime. That means he has chosen materials and employed methods which effectively provoke a certain response:—the sense,

³ Banister Fletcher, *A History of Architecture*, p. 29.

"The effect produced by this forest of columns is most awe-inspiring; the eye is led from the smaller columns of the side avenues, which gradually vanish into semi-darkness and give an idea of unlimited extent, to the larger columns of the central avenues lighted by the clear-story, which is formed in the difference of height between the central and side avenues—"

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or feeling of sublimity. We may study either the quality of the art that is thus effective or the effect art of such quality has. Both courses amount to the same thing: for it is impossible to walk on the surfaces of art without thought of the sustaining realm of formative feeling and design; and equally impossible to move within the realm of aroused feeling without thought of the forms and images provocative of such feeling.

The problem of the sublime has always been treated as a predominantly psychological one. Longinus, a neatly observant critic of literary technique, dwells on *ecstasy*, Burke on *fear*, Kant on *depression* and *recoil*, as marks of the sense of sublimity. All these answers explain too simply a psychic response which is subtle and complex. This response shows the following marks:—

A SPREADING IMAGINATIVE SUGGESTIVENESS

In a sense all art is imaginatively suggestive. This is as true of Keats who rarely leaves the confines of the beautiful as it is of Rabelais who never enters them. Keats in *The Eve of St. Agnes* has made a catalogue of dainties significant by allusions to the East,

from silken Samarkand to cedar'd Lebanon.

Here is a case of decorative suggestiveness. This world of mystery and romance is a world of images and suggestions to lend glamour and color;—a festooning as decorative and unemotional as are Japanese lanterns at a garden-fête. The floating images are not like a bluish mountain range in the distance appealing to the wanderer and the climber; they are strung on the fine wires of phrases that have distinction, smoothness, compactness, finality. It is not Samarkand that rouses us; it is the phrase *silken Samarkand* that satisfies us decoratively, and in turn sends us back to the original decorative touches of *blanched linen*, *jellies soother than the*

creamy curd, luccent syrops. There is then a centrifugal force in the imaginative suggestiveness of the beautiful, and the decorative, in the sense of a resting in the image. The circling imagery of the lyric is another example of it.

Contrast with this the sublime, which disappears as soon as the art becomes decorative. In a seascape there are several feet of canvas covered with grey, green, white, and black. There is beauty in the organization of lines; additional beauty in the rendering of the life of the sea as it breaks against the cliffs. But the effect is sublime only if our imagination steps into and out of the canvas, carries with it the stimulus of certain impressions—bleakness, strangeness, power, formlessness—and gathers image after image in an onset which knows no limit—and no stepping back within bounds. Arts like painting and sculpture are too circumscribed, too decorative, and too insistently formative to achieve sublime effects often; no painter of the sea could give the equivalent of Swinburne's stretching imagery,⁴ no landscape painter could rival Goethe's picture of the crashing trees in *Faust*. Music, on the other hand, has much of the spreading suggestiveness the sublime requires.

A SENSE OF TWOFOLD STRAIN

THE CONTENT STRAINING AWAY FROM THE DECORATIVE USE OF FORM:—Longinus has pointed out that ruggedness of style goes well with sublime effects; and that the smooth

⁴ Swinburne, *On the South Coast*

Up from shoreward, impelled far forward, by marsh and meadow, by lawn
and lea,

Inland still at her own wild will swells, rolls, and revels the surging sea.

A Nympholept

... as the

shifted sands

Speak forth and show but the strength of the sea's wild will
That sifts and grinds them as grain in the storm-wind's mill.
In thee is the doom that falls and the doom that stands:
The tempests utter thy word, and the stars fulfil.

and purely decorative are to be avoided. This suggests a conflict between the sublime and the beautiful, and such a conflict there undoubtedly is. By this is not meant that, for instance, a sublime passage in poetry cannot have beauty of rhythm and language. But there must be something in the form to arrest us and something to send us on, and the urging must be the stronger. This accounts for part of the strain, and for the dynamic character of the sublime. In Swinburne's *By the North Sea* the persuasive lilt and decorative patterning of the verse are too strong to allow a full sublimity of effect; in his *Tristram of Lyonesse* a rhymed form is used so unobtrusively and skilfully that image after image strikes the imagination with full vibrational and tensional force.

THE CONTENT STRAINING BEYOND THE FINITE: There is a strained forming of the formless and the not-to-be-formed; a pushing beyond the finite. As Swinburne puts it, our quest is of

The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

The imagery is of endless time, space vast or boundless, huge size, infinite possibilities in the way of the heroic or the hellish:—a universe remote from the common measure of human strength and human sorrow. Such a world strains without satisfying our demand for intellectual mastery and for practical and emotional adequacy.

A SENSE OF EXHILARATION

If the sublime is bound up with fear and ideas of self-preservation; ⁵ if it turns on our helplessness as sense beings; ⁶ if it implies a hostile relation to the will; ⁷ if it means a jolting and straining, why is it not a depressing experience? Its very name suggests exaltation and elation. Kant

⁵ Burke.

⁶ Kant.

⁷ Schopenhauer.

explains this exhilaration as a rebound: as sense beings we tremble at our insecurity in a world which can destroy us easily; but by shifting our ground to our rational selves we come to see that this world is of our own intellectual making and is our great moral opportunity. His analysis errs in (1) assuming an initial depression and a subsequent exhilarating recovery, (2) splitting sense and reason, and (3) binding the exhilaration up too closely with moral ideas.

The sublime, like the tragic, is an imaginative adventure; and, like the tragic, it is often an intensely emotional experience. We are roused, startled, swept off our feet. Intensity of feeling may, however, be lacking; there is none of it in the sublime indecencies of Aristophanes. There is exhilaration in the venturing: a sense of expanded life and of stretching to meet its startling possibilities. There is, too, a sense of freedom. Much has been made of the agreeableness of a well ordered, neatly packed universe. But what of the joys of intellectual disorder or, at least, of an unknown which acts as a challenge and gives us the feeling of new enterprises?—enterprises that may or may not become conquests. With this venturing comes a sense of tense activity on our part. It is like mountain-climbing, which feels sharply worthwhile in the doing, and which when done yields glimpses of the unknown, a wilderness of peaks, or nothing but dense fog. Life has seemed more direct and richer for the moment. As Swinburne puts it in *The Sea-board*:—

And a joy to the heart is a goal that it may not reach.
No sense that forever the limits of sense engird
No hearing or sight that is vassal to form or speech
Learns ever the secret that shadow and silence teach,
Hears ever the notes that ere ever they swell subside,
Sees ever the light that lights not the loud world's tide,
Clasps ever the cause of the lifelong scheme's control
Wherethrough we pursue, till the waters of life be dried,
The goal that is not, and ever again the goal.

THE TRAGIC

The term tragic goes back in its origins to the earliest stage in the development of the Greek drama; it is said to refer to the goatskin clothing worn by the actors. Werfel's *Goatsong* is a reminiscence of that early meaning. From this its first crude aesthetic use it has found its way into a dozen languages and has been stretched to cover life as well as art. It has come to mark loosely the quality of certain incidents and situations, and a peculiar psychic response they call forth. The material is not sharply set aside, and the psychic response is not clearly understood; the problem therefore arises of getting rid of the marginal raggedness of common speech and of discovering a fairly representative meaning.

THE TRAGIC IN LIFE

THE TRAGIC MATERIAL

Among things commonly called tragic are: the collapse of a great social project; a fatal accident to a child; the crumbling of a man's ideals; the suicide of a man of promise; the grinding wear of life; the effect of drug-taking. If these and similar occurrences are attended to it will be seen that death is the common mark of many. Death is held to be tragic because it destroys the chance of happiness and breaks in upon human purposes in brutal fashion, whether it appears abruptly or goes about its work with a grim slowness. But there are other tragedies in life besides this extreme physical collapse. Disillusionment, attrition or ruin, routed aims, agony of mind, disease or poverty, and loss of

honor make the continuance of life rather than its termination a tragedy. In all these cases happiness is thwarted, and human interests are denied their measure of satisfaction.

Of all tragic material it may be said that the collapse must be of something of value; and that value must either be present in the midst of the ruin or be supplied by an imagination looking back. There must be a glint of splendor in a mind darkened by madness; eminence in the purposes swept aside; strength or grandeur in the man that goes under or in the forces that overwhelm him; freshness and fervor in the longing for happiness which is to be blocked. The tragedy grows with the intensity of the contrast.

THE PSYCHIC RESPONSE

What is our response to such tragic material? If we exclaim: How sad! we are merely recording an emotional depression on our part. If we say: How horrible! or How terrible! we are confessing in words to a sense of shock and a defensive shrinking and warding off. But if we say: How tragic! we are responding in a different and much less simple way. For one thing, the stress is less sharply on ourselves and our feelings and impulses. Not that we are not profoundly moved! but there is something detached and objective about our experience. The key to the first and second responses are sympathetic and self-feelings and protective impulses; this the third response shows a going beyond a suffering individual and a disturbed self; it reveals a universalizing and intellectualizing of an incident, and an admixture of enjoyment.

Is it possible to break up this complex tragic response? The elements variously mixed in different individuals and different cases are the following: (1) a shock; (2) the sense of a collapse, more or less complete, of something humanly

prized; (3) an intensified sense of the value of whatever has been lost; (4) a questioning often ending in revolt; (5) a sense of imaginative compensation; (6) a dash of pleasure. Words like *moved*, *shaken*, *stirred*, *shattered*, *erschütternd* signalize the profound mental and physical disturbance which is part of the experience of the tragic. Again, we are aware of the collapse of something of value—and it is to be noted that this something may range from a simple happiness-value to complex moral, religious or intellectual values. It need not be something prized by the suffering individual himself. The loss throws into sharp relief the value of the thing lost, and rouses a spirit of questioning wonder, and, often, of revolt. How can such things be? Why are such things? Some physical or moral evil acts as a challenge flung at my ideal of a just God—a challenge I cannot meet—and so I question and rebel.¹ Some stupid accident mars beyond redemption the logical reading of life. I ask myself: Is this merely a corrupt text or is it no text at all? and halt perplexed and resentful. Something ugly eats into life like a blight and spoils it for me. Here is part of the cosmic element in the sense of the tragic: this attempted reference of an incident to a world text, which is lacking in our sense of the sad or the horrible. There is, next, *imaginative compensation*. The questioning has not been stilled; the starkness of the incident has been overcome, the range of the problematic widened, and a sweep and tension given to the imagination which prove invigorating and pleasurable.

THE TRAGIC IN ART

In art the tragic appears at many points. It outsteps the limits of tragedy and may be found in a poem, a novel,

¹ Cf. the instance of counter-conversion in James's *The Varieties of Religious Experience*.

a musical composition, a painting or a piece of sculpture. The materials are those of life. The *Niobe* group and the *Laocoon* give the onslaught of death; *Macbeth*, *Othello*, and *Père Goriot* a moral collapse; Turgenev's *Spring Freshets* and *Smoke*, Thackeray's *Newcomes*, Hergesheimer's *Cythera*, and Lawrence's *Women in Love*, the tragedy of personal relations; *Don Quixote*, *The Misanthrope*, and *The Wild Duck*, the tragic implications of ideals. Villon's *Les Regrets de la Belle Heaulmière*, Verlaine's *Chanson d'Automne*, *Sérénade*, and *Sagesse*, Baudelaire's *Spleen*, and Turgenev's *Nest of Nobles* all strike the note of disillusionment; *Rosmersholm* and Dreiser's *An American Tragedy* are tragedies of soul-division and weakness; the *Book of Job*, *King Lear*, *Ghosts*, *The Brothers Karamazov*, and *The Hand of the Potter* carry madness and revolt to the very judgment-seat of God.

The tragic in art differs from the tragic in life in a peculiar selection and stressing of materials and a peculiarly colored response. The secret of the tragic as an aesthetic type lies in an understanding of these differences; and the first clue to the secret is given by the awareness of an imagined world. To the narrowest circle of the actual world—the circle that affects me and mine—I respond in terms of attempted adjustment, of practical protest, of defence reactions. Even the remoter circlings of that actual world—a plague or famine in India, the Titanic disaster, a revolution in Russia, fallen kings, a volcanic eruption in Japan affect me in a practical sense; help must be rendered, sympathy must be bestowed, a repetition of such disasters must, if possible, be averted. But what of the past, which cannot be changed and which is in a very real sense an imagined thing? What of such supremely tragic events as the crucifixion, the death of Socrates, the massacre of the Night of St. Bartholomew? Here also there is a sense of actual persons and of actual suffering and loss. But when we step

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within the domain of art we enter a world of whose illusory, imaginatively created nature we are subconsciously aware. This world unfolds and reveals the feelings and spiritual conflicts of imaginary persons and situations with developing implications of struggle and suffering. There is no actual smothering or cutting into flesh in the fifth act of *Othello*; we are forced into the consciousness of Othello and Desdemona and into a mass of simulated feelings, motives, designs, and complications. We do not seek to change things nor set ourselves on guard against them; we are taken outside ourselves into a personal life imaginatively shaped by the poet or as in Swinburne's *Faustine*² into the realm of interpretative comment and of a simulated response on the part of the poet.

This clue of an imagined world offers what seems to be a difficulty. In one sense the imagined madness of Lear and the ruined soul of Faustine mean less to me than they

² Wine and rank poison, milk and blood
Being mixed therein
Since first the devil threw dice with God
For you, Faustine.

Your naked new-born soul, their stake,
Stood blind between;
God said "let him that wins her take
And keep Faustine."

But this time Satan throve, no doubt;
Long since, I ween,
God's part in you was battered out;
Long since, Faustine.

The die rang sideways as it fell,
Rang cracked and thin,
Like a man's laughter heard in hell
Far down, Faustine.

A shadow of laughter like a sigh,
Dead sorrow's kin;
So rang, thrown down, the devil's die
That won Faustine.

would if Lear were a close friend and Faustine were my wife. But in another way they mean much more. I am less directly and unbearably affected, but I realize more sharply and profoundly the universal meaning of such experiences. As a result, the shock becomes a deep, reverberating emotional disturbance; and there is an intensified and widened sense of both value and loss. There is this further change. As the emphasis is shifted from the effect on me to the inner life of others and the human quality of their problems or to the cosmic response of the artist who has created them, the questioning and the revolt which mark the response to the tragic in actual life is given a different meaning. The questions of Job and the revolt of Prometheus or Satan are set within imaginary lives and characters and are taken as their problem, not ours. If the challenging is done by the poet rather than by his characters the same thing holds true; there is a detached, hovering sense of cosmic flaws and riddles. All theories of the tragic which make a point of self-reference in whatever sense—How like Macbeth I am potentially! How precarious is my happiness! How important it is for me to avoid excessive passion! How slender my title to reason! are fundamentally mistaken; the pull is all the other way.

Two differences remain. In the tragic materials and the tragic response of art there are a stronger admixture of pleasure and a larger measure of imaginative redemption than are to be had in those of life. That the psychic response to the tragic in art is enjoyable can hardly be denied. But the source of such pleasure is not to be looked for in lustful cruelty, in the sense of a contrasting security, or in opportunities for moral satisfaction. Real life offers better chances of lashing and gloating, of tasting comfort sweetened by another's pain, of tracing patterns of justice and reading moral lessons with an agreeable gesture of rebuke. The world of art is an imaginatively created world,

and yields the pleasures of a tensed, electrified, and ranging imagination. It is also an imaginatively re-valued world, with a new aesthetic value, selective of the old, superadded. This new value, as it appears in the tragic, is the *imaginative redemption of evil*. If this is lost sight of neither the tragic nor tragedy as an art form can be understood.

The evil to be redeemed may be physical or moral or intellectual or aesthetic. The methods of redeeming are many. One of the simplest is beauty of form added. Set to the measure of verse, organized, clothed in resplendent language and color, repulsive things like leprosy, adultery, incest, and jealousy are reclaimed by a superimposed formal beauty. But this is only part of the secret of such plays as the *Oedipus Rex*, the *Hippolytus*, *The Madness of Hercules*, and *The Cenci*. There is, in addition, a cleansing by fire—the fires of a hot selective imagination clearing away dross, eating its way to the hard metal of human passions and making them glow with a white heat. These two ways of redeeming are combined in Hamlet's interview with his mother, in the death sorrow scene of *Lilium*, and in Swinburne's *Dolores*. The dross and the disorder need, however, not be cleared away. Lear in his madness and Othello in his turmoil and agony of mind spew forth much that is disgusting. In such cases a third method is used, that of "absolute poetry": which means a language of large and universal accents, and a reaching beyond the stature of the tragic hero to the poet—and then beyond the poet. It is Shakespeare who stalks in the tempestuous and unhinged mind of Lear and lives in the questioning Hamlet—not the Shakespeare who made good investments and was fond of lawsuits, but Shakespeare the universal artist. Instead of being lifted out of the consciousness of the individual we may be set down at its centre and be made to share imaginatively an inner life. This is a fourth method, which Shakespeare often combines with the third. It is strikingly used

by Browning. The sordid murder and the trivial characters of *The Yellow Book* are redeemed in *The Ring and the Book* by means of an elaboration of the thoughts, passions, and feelings of the persons concerned, into whose selves we are sunk. O'Neill in *The Hairy Ape* and Toller in *Hinkemann* redeem very difficult material in the same way.

This principle of *imaginative redemption*, or compensation, present even in the tragic responses of life, receives a sharper accent and wider use in those of art; and is worth carrying over into a study of tragedy as a key with which to unlock its secrets. While it is to be found elsewhere as well,³ it appears most impressively in the tragic.

TRAGEDY

TRAGEDY AS A FORM OF ART

The external marks of tragedy present no difficulties.

³ Imaginative redemption may be traced in Aristophanes, Rabelais, Swift, Cabell; in the hell-touched etchings of Beardsley and Rops. Other instances are *The Book of Revelations*, Dante's *Inferno*, and Jeffers' *Roan Stallion*.

Ultra-modern poetry deliberately cuts itself off from beauty of material and from the simple first method of imaginative redemption. It sets itself a very difficult task—a task at which it fails when it slings on the page incongruous facts and raw words and achieves neither intensity nor discrimination. But it is a task worth the enterprise, for it promises a new intake and reshaping of materials often cast aside as worthless. There is little of this poetry without blemish, but much of it shows the redeeming magic of an original, fusing imagination. There is a fine sweep to Sandburg's *Prairie*:

Have you seen a red sunset drip over one of my corn-fields, the shore of night stars, the wave lines of dawn up a wheat valley?

Have you heard my threshing crews yelling in the chaff of a strawpile and the running wheat of the wagon-boards, my cornhuskers, my harvest hands hauling crops, singing dreams of women, worlds, horizons?

There is a new response to machinery in his *Gargoyle*:

I saw a mouth jeering. A smile of melted iron ran over it. Its laugh was full of nails rattling. It was a child's dream of a mouth.

A fist hit the mouth: knuckles of gun-metal driven by an electric wrist and shoulder. It was a child's dream of an arm.

The fist hit the mouth over and over, again and again. The mouth bled melted iron, and laughed its laughter of nails rattling.

Tragedies may be in verse or prose; they may conform to the old scheme of five acts—exposition, mounting complication, climax, unraveling, and catastrophe—or they may disregard this traditional scaffolding and break into a loose succession of scenes. They offer by means of stage-setting, costume, dialogue, and monologue a criss-cross of feelings and purposes and a developing action ending in a tragic collapse meant to be final. Any such preliminary definition reveals tragedy as a complex form of art, with a difficult technique, a varied appeal, and a nature and purpose not easily discovered.

Four terms may be used in tracing the nature of tragedy: *motivation, conflict, suffering, tragic collapse*.

MOTIVATION: The incidents and situations in a tragedy reflect the purposes, the planful ordering, and the scheming of the *dramatis personae*, and they in turn reflect interests and motives. There is a double reference: the purpose is shown issuing in action and leading to complications, and it is also traced back to an interplay of impulses and impelling ideals. Thus the wreckage in the last scenes of *The Wild Duck* is not mere chance débris; it interests us in relation to the meddling of Gregers and the planning of Hjalmar and Hedvig, and all this in turn in relation to the muddleheaded idealism of Gregers, the selfishness of Hjalmar, and the adolescent mind of Hedvig. Words as well as actions are motivated; they are meant to express an inner preferential and purposive life. Since tragedy works from within outwards, setting us down within the confines of its characters and asking us to share their consciousness, it has a deep and far-reaching appeal. It looks for the logic of events in character, and for the secret of character in a logic of contending and contrasted motives. It means to be more logical than life itself, in as much as incidents that are accidental in a teleological sense are ruled out or at least

subordinated, and personal experiences are unified and made more typically expressive. This very unification leads to a sharp contrasting of individuals, and a setting at odds of their interests, purposes, and acts.

CONFLICT: This tensional economy is reflected in the conflicts which play so important a part in tragedy and have so large a share in its dramatic value. Whether or not conflict is essential to tragedy is a much debated question. In 1894 Brunetière in *La Loi du Theatre* formulated what he called the law of the drama: "Drama is a representation of the will of man in conflict with the mysterious powers or natural forces which limit and belittle us; it is one of us thrown living upon the stage, there to struggle against fatality, against social law, against one of his fellow-mortals, against himself, if need be, against the interests, the prejudices, the folly, the malevolence of those who surround him." In tragedy he holds this to be of necessity a losing fight; in serious drama the hero avails himself of his one chance of success; in comedy the forces are apparently equal. In contrast to the drama which shows man willing and setting himself definite aims which clash with other aims, the novel "is to give us a picture of the influence which is exercised upon us by all that is outside of ourselves."

William Archer and Henry Arthur Jones, men well versed in the craftsmanship of the drama, have made adverse comments on this theory. Archer contends that such a conflict does not mark all drama—that there is no struggling will in the *Agamemnon*, the *Oedipus Rex*, *Othello*, and *Ghosts*. He uses the similes of the spider and the fly and of the worm on the hook; and speaks of Oedipus as simply writhing "under one revelation after another of bygone error and unwitting crime." He finds himself forced to substitute *crisis* for *conflict*, and offers this definition: "A play is a more or less rapidly-developing crisis in destiny or circumstances, and

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a dramatic scene is a crisis within a crisis, clearly furthering the ultimate event." He interprets a crisis in terms of *rapid and startling changes*, admits that not all crises are dramatic, and selects *emotional excitement* and *the vivid manifestation of character* as essential marks of dramatic crises. Henry Arthur Jones's criticism is pointed at both Brunetière and Archer. He agrees with Archer that the acceptance of Brunetière's law means disapproval of *Agamemnon* and *Oedipus Rex*. He insists, however, that a dramatic crisis provokes "a sense of conflict, active or implied; and often a conflict of the human will." To him drama is a conflict as well as a series of critical situations; it is the portrayal of a person "consciously or unconsciously 'up against' some antagonistic person, circumstance, or fortune." But what we are interested in is not the struggle—for there may be none—it is the physical or psychic reaction of the person; his response to the obstacle. This theory modifies and combines those of Brunetière and Archer.

I am quite as willing to concede certain weaknesses in Brunetière's law of the drama as I am ready to dispute the justice of his critics' interpretation of it, and of the appropriateness of some of the material they use in support of their criticisms. It may be granted that *Agamemnon* and *Oedipus* are "up against" what Jones calls "a tough proposition," or rather a hopeless one. A family curse dooms both. But to regard *Oedipus* as merely passive, writhing under successive revelations or to put our interest simply in his psychic response to these revelations, is to misread a great tragedy utterly. *Oedipus* is active throughout. It is a losing fight: the dice are loaded; the will of the gods comes to pass. For the way of that will coming to pass—the cumulative shaping of the crisis—we must look to the vigorous, aggressive will of *Oedipus*. It is he who forces the seer to make his first revelation;⁴ it is he who summons Creon

⁴ Teiresias:—for thou didst spur me into speech against my will.

and accuses him of plotting; ⁵ it is he who sends for the servant, persists in his fatal search, and wrenches the truth from the herdsman. This will of his is active even after his self-blinding. Here is a struggling will to know the truth, with obstacles—the plea of Iocasta, the message of the death of Polybus, the fears of Oedipus himself—put in the way and overcome. Here is will as Brunetière understands it—will setting aims, reflecting decisions, moulding actions.

Apollo was he that brought these my woes to pass, these my sore, sore woes: but the hand that struck the eyes was none save mine, wretched that I am! Why was I to see, when sight could show me nothing sweet?

The *Oedipus* cannot be used to discredit Brunetière's theory.

The *Agamemnon* presents a more difficult case. There is no struggle on the part of Agamemnon to escape the fatal trap, for he knows of none; his death is too swift for any mental reaction. There is no conflict in the mind of Clytemnaestra. There are struggle and psychic response on the part of Cassandra, who seeks in vain to reveal coherently what she can neither clearly express nor avert, and on the part of the old citizens, who sense an impending doom, struggle to escape from a meshwork of fears and doubts, hurl curses at the murderess, and lay feeble hands on sword hilts. The play ends with an unresolved conflict. The dramatic and tragic meaning of the *Agamemnon* goes far beyond the figure of the king; it is a matter of interlocked destinies and the intertwining of divine and human purposes. It seems strange that Aeschylus, who everywhere sings the relentlessness of Fate, should be able to give, here as well as in the *Prometheus* and *The Seven Against Thebes*, splendid renderings of human will. The stress is on human initiative and human motives. Cassandra has drawn upon

⁵ Oedipus: When the stealthy plotter is moving on me in quick sort, I, too, must be quick with my counterplot. If I await him in repose, his ends will have been gained, and mine missed.

herself the curse because she sought to warn the Trojans; Clytemnaestra takes full responsibility for her deed⁶ and justifies it on the ground of Iphigenia's sacrifice and Cassandra's seduction; Aegisthus calls himself a rightful slayer and cites his ill treatment as a motive. Agamemnon's triumphant entry is the very apotheosis of satisfied will. When he sets his purpose against Clytemnaestra's design to have him offend the gods by treading on purple there is a brief clash of wills and a fatal yielding.

Brunetière is right in seeing in tragedy a glorification of the will asserting itself in a losing fight, but he is wrong in putting too individual and too isolated an emphasis on will and conflict. Interest in psychology and the social sciences is leading us away from the clearcut, heroic, battling tragic hero or the scheming villain to a tragedy of sub-conscious forces, embattled ideas, and the onset and recoil of groups. We give a wider fling to the term will, and a more subtle reading to motives and psychic responses. Brunetière fails to see that, essential as is a struggling will, the conflict must be related to such other things as motivation, psychic response, suffering, and the tragic collapse. It is this interrelationship that is vital. Oedipus, "the worm writhing on the hook," the mad Ajax, and Othello are all "up against it"; they are all struggling without success. Ineffectual struggles in themselves do not hold us—why then the interest in these tragic figures? For one thing, we imagine a worm to be aware of what it is he is "up against," and we ourselves know exactly what that is. Not so in tragedy! The situation is shown evolving; there is much ignorance and confusion. This removes from our sense of the inevitable something of the hard and fast, and introduces suspense and motor responses. Again, there is the psychic element

⁶ Clytemnaestra:—You are trying me as if I were a foolish woman; but I with fearless heart say to you who know.—and it is all one to me whether you wish to approve or to blame me: "This is Agamemnon, my husband, now dead, the work of this right hand, a righteous worker!"

—purposes in their tensing and slackening, explosions of feeling, agony mental and physical.

SUFFERING: Quite as essential to tragedy as conflict is suffering. It may be physical,—a festering wound in the *Philoctetes*; insanity, torn eyeballs, and violent death in *King Lear*; cold and hunger in Gorky's *Night Lodging*; a staggering mixture of fear and fatigue in *The Emperor Jones*; delirium in *Hannele*; disease in *Ghosts* and *The Straw*. It may be mental—the keen ache of a halting will in *Hamlet*; the dull pain of an outrage in the *Philoctetes* and the *Prometheus*; the stab of disillusionment in *Timon of Athens*, *Troilus and Cressida*, and *Rain*; the pangs of lost honor in Calderon's *The Judge of Zalamea*, Hebbel's *The Ring of Gyges*, and Sudermann's *Ehre*; the tortures of loneliness, divided sympathies, and soiled ideals. Instead of being presented directly, the suffering may be shown in its results or in retrospect; both are favorite methods with Ibsen. Nor need it be limited to the hero. In modern drama there is much dispersed suffering, and more or less human wreckage about.

Why then is tragedy not a chamber of horrors or a distressing exhibition of the raw wounds of life? The answer may be found in another question. Why do we not say, "Poor Hamlet!" or "Poor Desdemona!" as we might in real life? It is because we are in tragedy led beyond the suffering, in two directions. (1) Suffering is related to reversals of fortune, and they in turn are grounded in purposes and conflicts of will. (2) The suffering of the individual is shown within the context of (a) redeeming interests such as intellectual range and depth of feeling, and admirable qualities—staunchness, patience, largeheartedness; (b) a dramatic situation whose meaning is larger than the disaster of a single person; and (3) life as a mixture of the passive and active, of the drab and the splendid, of the human and the cosmic. Thus suffering Desdemona reveals depth of

feeling and intensity of pleading; interests us in relation to the treachery of Iago and the flawed mind of Othello; is part and parcel of a situation which appeals to the intellect and the imagination as well as to emotion—a situation whose catastrophe means more than the shattering of this or that individual caught in its coils.

A COLLAPSE MEANT TO BE FINAL: The simplest form of final collapse is death, and in most tragedies death takes its toll. Short of that, there may be something equally final—the hopeless insanity of Oswald in *Ghosts*; the utter ruin of Peer Gynt's dreams. In comedy, as distinguished from tragedy, the collapse is not final and the person or thing involved is not felt to be of great moment or value. There it is a matter of trivial issues, shallow plots, set-backs, and temporarily discomfited characters. Falstaff in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, Malvolio in *Twelfth Night*, Tartuffe and Harpagon are all brought face to face with the ruin of their schemes and hopes. But we do not get the sense of a permanent loss or gain. Falstaff will make another easy-going attempt on the well-entrenched virtue of some burgher's wife and will again be tricked; Malvolio will air his vanity and Tartuffe his cant in other circumstances; and Harpagon actually returns to his moneybox. Not so in tragedy! It shows the cracking of a noble heart, the downfall of a mighty passion or of a great cause, the smashing beyond repair of a sensitive nature. Something has been lost, once and for all, and the very loss drives home the value and the sense of the flaw that is in all things human.

Here is further evidence of how all the essentials of tragedy are interconnected. The *collapse* must be more than an *unmotivated* fit of apoplexy; it must be the snapping of a tensional situation marked by *conflict*—of men or principles—; it must reveal passion, purpose, *suffering*, all blending in a mental crisis; it must carry us beyond thwarted and

suffering individuals to cosmic ideas and feelings, and beyond the irreparable loss to a *new imaginative value*.

AESTHETIC PRINCIPLES

It is possible to make a series, which may serve the use of tests of excellence of tragedies. They may be stood up in a row like soldiers, passed in review, and then inspected separately.

- a. *There must be unified action.*
- b. *This action must march.*
- c. *This march must be marked by (1) complications, (2) conflicts, (3) crises, mental and physical; and must terminate in a catastrophe.*
- d. *The action, in its development, crises, and catastrophe (1) must be given in terms of (a) a direct, vivid, and consistent portrayal of character, (b) an intense and significant picture of life, (c) human suffering; and (2) must be imaginatively redeemed by one or all of these things: beauty or vigor of language, intensity of passion, sweep, reach or depth of images and ideas, and a thrust into cosmic problems.*

a. **THERE MUST BE UNIFIED ACTION:** This is merely a special case of the general aesthetic form of organization. By action is meant neither something violent and startling only nor something that just happens. It may be very quiet and unobtrusive, a thing of the mind rather than a matter of riot, battle, and sudden death; and it expresses purpose. *Hamlet* is more than a chronicle of the sayings and doings of the Prince of Denmark; it is the setting of a definite problem of revenge and attempted solution by means of a series of purposes and acts. Here is organizational unity in the consciousness and will of a single, outstanding personality. There are other types of unifying: the unity

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of intersecting lives—Io in the *Prometheus*, Dr. Rank in *A Doll's House*—the unity of parallel themes—the Gloster scenes in *King Lear*—the unity of groups—Hauptmann's *The Weavers*, Galsworthy's *The Mob*; the unity of ideas—Goethe's *Faust*, Werfel's *Goatsong*, Galsworthy's *Loyalties*. All this goes far beyond Aristotle's conception of simple and complex plots; but it is true in spirit to his underlying idea that events and incidents in a tragedy must hang together.

b. **THIS ACTION MUST MARCH:** Tragedy, like other forms of the drama, presents life in motion. It must not be merely static. Tempo and momentum may vary; the advance may be swift and sure, or leisurely, and there may be halting and pauses. There must, however, be no continuous marking of time. The action must not disappear in lyricism, minute characterization, rhetoric, and a smother of words.

c. **THIS MARCH MUST BE MARKED BY COMPLICATIONS, CONFLICTS, CRISES, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL; AND MUST TERMINATE IN A CATASTROPHE:** When the will of an individual or group issues in action complications arise, obstacles are met with, and critical conflicts emerge. If the action is stripped of such complexities it fails to hold our interest. The element of suspense is then lacking; and we are denied the chance of following a varied contest; of working out the logic of situations; of tensing and stretching our imagination as we balance on the steep and dangerous places of experience. In addition then to *unity* and *drive*, there must be a *rich and tensional action*. This may be gained in various ways; no one and only formula must be forced upon tragedy.

As for the catastrophe, it is the burning glass which gathers to a point all the forces and interests of tragedy and starts a smoky flare of disaster. The catastrophe must be necessary, gripping, tremendous in its upheaval and reverberating in its effect.

d. **THIS ACTION, IN ITS DEVELOPMENT, CRISES, AND CA-**

TASTROPHE, (1) MUST BE GIVEN IN TERMS OF (a) A DIRECT, VIVID, AND CONSISTENT PORTRAYAL OF CHARACTER, (b) AN INTENSE AND SIGNIFICANT PICTURE OF LIFE, (c) HUMAN SUFFERING; AND (2) MUST BE IMAGINATIVELY REDEEMED BY ONE OR ALL OF THESE THINGS: BEAUTY OR VIGOR OF LANGUAGE, INTENSITY OF PASSION, REACH AND DEPTH OF IMAGES AND IDEAS, AND A THRUST INTO COSMIC PROBLEMS. Tragedy shows character largely from within. It puts on the stage persons acting out their purposes, and it reveals the consciousness in which these purposes take shape—the feelings, the moods, the deliberations, the sense of self on the part of the individual. The more directly and profoundly it does this the greater its significance as tragedy will be. The *Medea*, *Hamlet*, and *Peer Gynt* may be used in illustration: all three exhibit a *self-revealing* central character. The impression given is vivid and deep. The mind of Medea, torn between love of child and hatred of husband, stands revealed in its tangle of motives and moods, and flashes in vivid as well as in subtle colors. In some of Maeterlinck's earlier dramas there is a sort of washed out character-drawing; the inner life is given, but too much in mood and too little in purpose. Again, character-drawing must be *consistent*. When Aristotle made this demand he met a simple situation in a simple way. Characters in Greek tragedy are not complex and are not as a rule shown as changing. When there is change, he contends, it ought to be well grounded. The modern problem is much less simple. Much of our interest is in character as developing; the puzzle of the subconscious enters such plays as Werfel's *Spiegelmensch* and O'Neill's *The Great God Brown*; and there is a growing distrust of over-rationalized character. We still insist, however, on an interrelation of motives, moods, and actions, and on the absence of sudden breaks or inconsistencies in character-drawing. In comedy there may be such breaks. In plays like *Cymbeline*, *A Winter's Tale*,

Much Ado About Nothing, *Measure for Measure* the leopard changes his spots in a single washing. Such facile, unmotivated changes are admissible in comedy, where character is not to be taken very seriously, but not in tragedy, where it is of the greatest importance.

Tragedy must give an intense and significant picture of life. In contrast to the novel, which in its hundreds of pages gives a branching and spreading life of many characters and incidents—trunk, fibre, mottled bark, veined or galled leaf—tragedy selects a few characters of special significance and moments that are critical and packs this truncated life of the imagination with an intensity and wealth of appeal not to be found elsewhere, neither in art nor in actual living. This it does in part by selection—in part by a sort of syncope-stressing, and in part by an imaginative quickening of inert material.

Tragedy gains emotional depth by accentuating suffering. In real life suffering is too often purely physical, inarticulate, and related solely to this or that individual. Tragedy makes it reflect agony of mind; gives it voice in the imprecations of a Lear or a Timon, in the self-torture of Othello, and in the wailings of *The Trojan Women*; and lifts it beyond the individual to make it a throbbing sorrow to be found in all things human.

Here is that *thrust into cosmic problems* which is one of the methods of *imaginative redemption*. Of the need of imaginatively redeeming, in some fashion or other, the mixed and often repulsive materials of tragedy there can be no doubt. The meaning of the term may be gained by pointing to examples outside the field of tragedy. Indecency is redeemed by Rabelais, vulgarity by a bit of picturesque slang, profanity by a phrase like *Sacré nom d'un nom*. No change has been effected in moral values: the things remain reprehensible. But the attention is shifted from the thing to the artist—to Rabelais hovering like a god above dirty wa-

ters, to the coiner of an unusual turn of speech, to the blasphemer who shows originality and imagination even in his blasphemy—and then to the thing, which is given an altered aesthetic value. In Ford's *Tis Pity She's a Whore* and Dreiser's *The Hand of the Potter* the materials are such as to arouse an immediate moral revulsion, but they are redeemed, in the one case by form and a curious blend of restraint and passion, and in the other by building the problem out in the universe. Dreiser's title is striking and haunting and shares in the redemption, Ford's is commonplace and does not. These two plays have been chosen, one of them an idealizing, and the other a naturalistic portrait, for the purpose of insisting that (1) there are many methods of imaginative redemption, (2) it is not necessary to avoid crass situations, repulsive characters or foul speech, and (3) imaginative must not be confused with moral redemption. The first point needs no comment. As for the second, the choice of the sordid and the narrow imposes a task not easily met. Natural advantages, such as stateliness and breadth of scene, beauty of character, and pomp of language, there are none; their place must be taken by a probing, ranging, and fusing imagination. Ibsen in *Ghosts* and Tolstoy in *The Power of Darkness* are successful; O'Neill in *Anna Christie* and Wedekind in *The Awakening of Spring* and *The Box of Pandora* fall short of complete success.

The third point demands a further clearing. Tragedy is often viewed from a moral angle; quite plausibly so since it has at times reflected great religious and moral beliefs and caught the spirit of the Morality Play, and since it works so largely in the stuff of common moral experience. Put into play the human trait of strong partisanship in moral matters and the widely held belief that "the right side ought to win," and the stage is set for the theory of moral redemption. This theory of tragedy makes two closely related demands: that for a vice there ought to be a compensatory

virtue; and that vice ought to be punished and the cosmic balance reestablished. One of its special technical forms is that of "poetic justice"; every character caught in the maelstrom of suffering must have some moral flaw, otherwise our sense of justice would be outraged. Commentators like Gervinus have discovered blameworthiness in Cordelia, Desdemona, and the Fool in *King Lear*, and have looked for virtues or at least plausible excuses in the villainies of Iago and Richard III. Often the theory appears as the general demand that a world satisfying to our moral sense be presented—a world in which weakness and overreaching crime lead to commensurate self-collapse, justice is done, and the right is vindicated. We are thus to be given a chance for moral edification, often denied us in real life.

I admit that tragedies like *Macbeth* and *Hedda Gabler* and tragic novels like *Anna Karenina*, *Madame Bovary*, and *An American Tragedy* render the logic of sin relentlessly and with no moral didacticism. But I maintain that it is the purpose of the tragic poet, not to trace simple moral patterns and to justify the way of God to man, but to rouse us to the infinite imaginative possibilities of life. This is as true of the devout Aeschylus as it is of the sceptical Euripides. A queer justice is dispensed in the *Hippolytus* and a queer fate stalks through Synge, Strindberg, Dunsany, and Wedekind. Evil unpaid for, moral chaos, the nightmare shapes of the subconscious, cruelty and waste at the heart of the process of living—all these things have a great imaginative value, which must not be ruled out through any complacent formula. Virtues and great moral moments, it is true, have a splendor and an appeal which must be utilized; but only in the most conventional drama are they used for the purpose of either pointing moral lessons or creating faith in the righteousness of the universe. Elsewhere they count for what they are worth to the imagination. The reach and stretch of *Hamlet*, *Faust*, *Peer Gynt*, and *Goatsong* go far

beyond any moral truth or moral ideal. To set *moral* in the place of *imaginative* redemption is to run the risk of seriously misunderstanding the spirit of tragedy.⁷

THE AESTHETIC SIGNIFICANCE OF TRAGEDY

An original fact must be rescued from a tangle of metaphysics and psychology and a meshwork of traditions. It is this: tragedy selects material such as reversals of fortune, disasters, suffering, vice, disintegration, which in real life would be painful, and succeeds in making of it a source of pleasure. Two questions await an answer: why are such materials chosen? and how are they made enjoyable?

THE SECRET OF THE CHOICE: It seems strange that we should in art, which is a world of our imaginative re-making, deliberately choose what is distressing, harrowing, and overwhelming. Why is there such a form of art as tragedy? What is the meaning of its lowering gloom, of

⁷ The following may serve as an illustration of how easy it is to fall into this confusion and how difficult it is to interpret any tragedy correctly. Because of *The Box of Pandora* Wedekind was charged with an offense against public morality. The lower court found for acquittal, but this verdict was reversed by the two higher courts and the play ordered destroyed or modified. All three took Lulu for the central figure, and they concurred in the opinion that the spectacle of Lulu—the embodiment of sensuality—sinking from the height of life to the depths of a common prostitute and a horrible death was morally edifying. According to the lower court it was Wedekind's purpose to show "the demoniac power of a woman's beauty and insatiable lust from its highest height to its lowest depth, and in this crass form to warn against vice and to arouse human sympathy." The higher courts reversed the decision only because this moral redemption could not cancel the filth of the second act. Now, this is looking for a Hogarthian simplicity and moral impressiveness where they are not to be found. Wedekind, in the preface to his revised play, states that the central figure is not Lulu but the Gräfin Geschwitz, and that it was his purpose to raise to the dignity of a tragic theme a pathological perversion usually derided or ridiculed. This is evidently a problem of imaginative redemption; and Wedekind uses moral ideas—loyalty, agonized self-struggle, self-immolation—with that in view. His aim is not judgment and retribution; it is to get full psychic value and tragic tension from an abnormal type rich in the possibilities of conflict and suffering—a type neglected in tragedy because of moral disapproval.

its insistent stressing of evil of all kinds? Many answers have been given to this question. Here are a few:

Aristotle: The secret, according to Aristotle, is to be found in a *katharsis*, a purgation on the principle of curing like with like. Man is preyed upon by nameless dread and objectless pity; by indulging such passions and giving them point he temporarily rids himself of certain pathological elements they contain, and achieves a calm like that of the votaries of Dionysus after their ecstatic rites. In the absence of a fuller text, Aristotle's exact meaning must remain a matter of dispute. Is the purgation to apply to all passions or to pity and fear merely? Are pity and fear purging agencies? What are the pathological elements to be got rid of? It is at least clear that the passionateness and emotionalism of tragedy censured by Plato as a social menace are held by Aristotle to be a curative device. The cure yields pleasure—"the pleasure peculiar to tragedy." Here is a rudimentary biological theory which may well be construed within the wider context of the modern mind and its complex responses to life. The Aristotelian terms, pity and fear, have been thus construed by Hegel and his followers.

Hegel: Tragedy, for Hegel, is the envisaging in artistic form of the complex and tensional nature of a world-process of developing and organized reason. All the discords of life,—suffering, defeat, moral distress, the rivalry of ideals, the butcheries of history,—this bold thinker works into a rolling and swelling anthem of reason. What tragedy does is to give a vivid and searching portrayal of the tortured complications and a deepened sense of the unity and divinity of the world. It is an emotionally stressed exercise in cosmic reading. The text is full of disturbing ideas; the construction is difficult; there is enough to try any man's intellectual and moral mettle. The effect of a successful reading is a universalized pity and fear—a sense of human

kinship in suffering, and a sense of the majesty and the might of a triumphant world reason.

Schopenhauer: To Schopenhauer this triumphant system of reason seems to be nonsense. The world must be read in terms of will—a will expressing itself in murderous struggle, disillusionment, suffering, and enslaving man by means of his own aggressive desires. Why then should man add to the gloom and bitterness of life by putting within the frame of the drama a massed array of irrationalities? Why should he set himself the task of enjoying the mixture? The answer to these questions lies in Schopenhauer's theory of a partial escape from life through art. Tragedy shows a crossing of wills and a clash of interests; it shows the hero overwhelmed and purified—cleansed of willing—and it deadens the will in us also. It is man's way of driving out into the open the thing he has to fight, and of gaining calm and resignation from struggle at its keenest.

Nietzsche: Nietzsche, like Schopenhauer, explains the world in terms of will, but the setting is no longer gloomy, and will is not the villain in the play. The world is not to be denied and escaped from, it is to be affirmed even in its most questionable aspects. Tragedy is one of man's boldest affirmations. To explore the depths and agonies of life and to gain from them an ecstatic pleasure is to exhibit a supreme courage and a will to mastery which nothing can balk.

Bergson: Tragedy, to Bergson, is of the nature of a volcanic eruption. It is the hurling of a molten mass of passions and primitive impulses through the thin crust of orderliness and restraint which has formed on the social surfaces of life. It is a staging, within the non-destructive realm of art, of a chaos, a whirl of feelings, and a revolt real life no longer permits.

THE SOURCE OF THE ENJOYMENT: Some people are incapable of enjoying tragedy; they either sheer off to some-

thing lighter and more agreeable or they accept it with an heroic gesture which underscores the strain they feel. Even those who do enjoy it respond differently, but these varying reactions show a common element—a blend of exhilaration and calm. The exhilaration is not a mere emotional effervescence but a heightened tone of consciousness, and the calm is not the calm of resignation or fatigue. This experience marks the aesthetic satisfaction yielded by tragedy. It has been mine on the first reading of so gloomy a play as *Ghosts* and on the completion of a five hour performance of the *Oresteia*. It is one thing to record it, quite another thing to trace its sources.

What are the origins of this satisfaction? What are the pleasures of tragedy? The first (1) is pleasure in the dramatic. This has its humble analogue in common speech: we like to have "something doing." In the drama there is "something doing," from physical encounters, murder and suicide to subtle but none the less absorbing sparring for advantages. In tragedy the stakes are higher than they are in comedy, and the game is more seriously a game of purposes; there is therefore more eager pleasure in the watching. Next (2) is a pleasure in psychic revelation. There is an insatiable curiosity on the part of man directed at the inner life of his fellows. This ranges from indecent prying to a desire to understand their actions and to savor of their feelings. In tragedy this curiosity may be satisfied with a completeness denied in real life, for its texture is psychic and its characters are self-revelational. There is (3) pleasure in workmanship—the handling of a situation, the shading and rounding off of character, the deft use of phrase. Two of the most characteristic pleasures remain. If people are incapable of enjoying tragedy it is either because they lack imagination or because they cannot universalize their sympathetic feelings and cannot detach them from the ordinary motor responses of practical life. All art is life

imaginatively grasped and transformed. In the rendering of tragic materials this transforming is difficult, and the pleasure on that account greater and more poignant. Tragedy, then, yields (4) a pleasing sense of intensified life. Packed within narrow compass are characters in their significant moments of utterance and action, events in their significant complications; and rising above the beat and jangle of incident and character, with a huge wing-spread of meaning, are cosmic overtones. To all this we respond—innervating, stretching, sensing the sweep and the pressure. This may serve, too, as a biological theory of the origins of tragedy. One further pleasure must be added, that (5) of universalized and detached sympathetic feelings. Tragedy is a distillation of macerated happiness and the bitter stuff of failure and disillusionment; and this distillation, hot and biting as it is, is pleasing to a strong palate. To feel the pain of another as our own is agonizing; why then is there this pleasure in a form of art which seems to put a great strain on our sympathetic feelings? The obvious answer is that it is imaginary woes we are asked to respond to, but this answer hardly satisfies. When we come to look at the suffering in a tragedy we find it not localized in an individual, no matter how heavy the burden of the tragic hero may be, but dispersed, affecting the other characters and interpreted as the sorrows of man. It is like a wavering light running across the clouded surfaces of many mirrors, and losing itself in the darkness beyond. In the tragic second act of G raldy's *Aimer*, a serious play with a happy ending, intense suffering is shown dispersed over three persons—wife, husband, lover—. Sharply interested as we are in the predicament of each and readily as we respond to the agony of each, our interest and our sympathy, nevertheless, strike at and vibrate in answer to something beyond—the tangle of misunderstandings and the sorrow that edge life in black. Such suffused sympathy is found everywhere in tragedy.

To this must be added the matter of divided and detached sympathy. We are asked to respond sympathetically to the feelings and purposes of individuals whose interests are set in sharp opposition, or to pass to and fro between two hostile camps within one mind. This is true even of the old fashioned tragedy of villainy—*Richard III*, *Othello*, *The White Devil*—in which malice distils its poison of intrigue, for there is a sympathy that mocks at moral values. Imagine in real life such a situation as is presented in *Aimer*, and imagine yourself seriously attempting to straighten things out. The task would be painful—like trying to catch the conflicting motor and feeling values of three pieces of music played simultaneously. Why then the pleasure in the play? It is because there is no taking sides in the sense of pushing on toward a practical solution. The sympathy is detached. The pain in real life reflects a militancy, emotional and moral, which in tragedy is hushed. Here is one of the most puzzling and significant facts about tragedy. The weight of a world awry sinks deep into our consciousness and stirs it to its depths, but there is no militant desire to set this world aright, no apportioning of praise or blame, no sympathetic rushing to relieve. We are offered an opportunity which real life rarely grants us—of tasting to the full, with a discriminating and luxuriating taste, the imaginative quality of moral conflicts, of suffering, of purposes, and of our own sympathetic feelings.

Imaginative redemption, then, holds the secret of tragedy. It discloses its meaning as a type of art, and accounts for much in the quality of the pleasure it offers.

THE COMIC

The comic differs from the other aesthetic types in not appearing naturally and freely in all the arts. Architecture in its essential, structural effects has none of it; sculpture occasionally aims at it; music and the dance use it forcefully but not widely; it has no place in painting. It is only in literature and in certain types of the graphic arts—caricatures and cartoons—that it shows its full strength and variety: a variety greater than that of any other type.

If something is to be made of this problem, whose challenge has never been successfully met and much of whose mystery will remain at the end of this study, we must (1) examine the comic as an experience, tracing the fact and the causes of being amused by nature and by art; (2) pass in review the important theories of the comic; (3) discover what things are amusing and what devices are used to provoke laughter; (4) look into allied types—humor, satire, and wit—and (5) offer a brief analysis of comedy as a mass of comic effects with a structure and meaning of its own.

THE COMIC AS AN EXPERIENCE

The comic, like the tragic response, straddles life and art. Nature freely furnishes material: grotesque shapes, queer faces, twisted plays of character, startling mix-ups. On such incongruities and mishaps of life we feed with all the relish yielded by one of the oldest indulgences of man. They in turn are reflected in the mirror of art, concave or convex, and become doubly pleasing in the ingeniously distorted mirroring.

Of the comic as an experience it may be said that it is a common one. Few people fail to see "the funny side" of something. Again, it is intermittent. Being amused is in part a matter of mood, and moods come and go; even buffoons have their serious moments. As an aesthetic response it is marked by *detachment* and *distance*. It is variously compounded of good spirits; thought, and sympathetic and antipathetic feelings. It ranges from broad laughter to Meredith's "slim, feasting smile"; from laughter tinged with malice to laughter indulgent and companionable; from a response that is naive or straightforward to one that is sophisticated or subtle.

When an experience is as spontaneous and unmindful of itself as this, there seems something strained in the question: Why do we laugh? The question itself means many things to many minds. To some it is an excursion into physiology, child psychology or biology. Laughter involves facial distortion and a shaking diaphragm; appears within the first year of life; may be provoked by tickling; and undoubtedly has a biological meaning. Studies like those of Darwin, Preyer, Hall, Shinn, Robinson and general biological theories such as those of Spencer, Havelock Ellis, Sully, Robinson, and Watson have their own value. The aesthetician, however, must not allow himself to be taken away by them from the experience of being amused—of responding to the comic—and to be marched into a tangle of genetic guesses and mechanistic devices. Of what use is it to him to connect smiling with sucking;¹ to trace the area and curve of ticklishness;² to explain ticklishness as a protective contrivance against attack in warfare, against parasites or as a sex survival,³ or in terms of

¹ Freud, Allin, Greig.

² Hall and Allin, Robinson.

³ Robinson.

erotic excitement? ⁴ It is a far cry from the smile of a baby asleep or in distress, the laughter caused by digging a finger into his ribs, and adult hysterical laughter—which is like the snapping of a cord—to even the simple enjoyment and expression of the comic or the direct enjoyment of a game of bo-peep or the antics of a mechanical toy. It is only at this point that laughter becomes aesthetically significant. There is no reason for not carrying a pack stuffed with psychology and biology as valuable items of equipment, but we must be headed the right way—toward a fuller understanding of an experience which ranges from the grossest to the most subtle phases of life; an experience which spans life and the domain of art.

What then, in this broad sense, is the meaning of laughter? It is to the credit of the many theories offered that they have kept within the realm of aesthetically significant laughter; it is to their discredit that they incline to a onesided reading.

A review of some of these theories may be combined with an appreciative recognition of the truth they contain, a rebuke for their narrowness, and further analysis of the facts.

THEORIES OF THE COMIC

LAUGHTER AS SELF-GLORIFICATION

In its simplest form this theory appears in Hobbes. He speaks of laughter in terms of "sudden glory"; and this casual remark of his fits in well with his general reading of human nature. Whatever a man does he does for gain or glory; since he is as vain as he is selfish he resents any sign of undervaluing, and enjoys when he can a sense of superiority over his fellows.

From this Groos has developed a theory of the comic in

⁴ Havelock Ellis.

terms of a sense of superiority in the presence of something absurd; or of some part of ourselves felt to be inferior. Our laughter is at another's expense and is set down by us to our credit; or it is at the expense of the fool in us who was nearly taken in, and then it is self-praise on the part of our cleverer or more alert self. It is to the credit of Groos that he also recognizes a natural playfulness and gregariousness in human life and thus avoids something of the narrowness of Hobbes.

What truth is there in this theory of laughter? No doubt laughing is often a bit of self-congratulatory business. My neighbor has had a practical joke played on him. What a fool to walk into the trap! no such trap would snare me! My sense of security is voiced in my laughter and that in turn gives fresh strength to my assurance. I see a man of fifty falling in love and am amused at the Indian Summer madness of his courting. If he believed himself safe and then was swept off his feet, I laugh all the harder. Never should I make such a spectacle of myself! my head is too clear, my heart too cool, for that. But suppose I, too, become a victim. May I not laugh at myself as I am hurried off into irrationalities; and is not a sense of superiority involved in this laughter? I rise with the I that calls me a fool and look down on the I that is the fool. Thus does vanity snatch victory from defeat.

There need be no malice in such laughter; the attitude may be too complacent for that. When we do develop *Schadenfreude*—a malicious enjoyment of another's discomfort,—as in certain types of practical joking and in wit, our response can no longer be explained in terms of vanity, unless it be wounded vanity; rather does it reflect a cruelty that delights in inflicting pain, and an aggressive desire to debase. It is interesting to watch Freud, who leans heavily toward such ideas, especially in his analysis of

tendency-wit, struggling with the "sense of superiority." He assigns to it a place in the genesis of laughter and in a theory of the comic when he insists that comparison is implied in the comic; and he tries hard to keep self-glorification out of such comparisons. He is unsuccessful, for the term slips by the censor of his reasoned thought.

The theory that self-glorification, rooted in a sense of superiority, explains the comic falls short of being anything but a useful key to certain types. There are in it dangerous weaknesses. The vain man is not a good laugh. Uncritical of himself and constantly trapped by his conceit, he is the butt of jokes and the prey of comic writers.⁵ Vanity is too much concerned with itself, whereas the comic response looks abroad for something foolish or absurd. Again, there seems to be a sort of *regressus ad infinitum*: for every vain self laughed at we must assume a vainer self that does the laughing. Worst of all, the gregarious, kindly, sympathetic nature of much of our laughter is neglected.

SYMPATHETIC LAUGHTER

Comedians are familiar with the trick of laughing heartily for the purpose of having laughter start up, suddenly and explosively, in the audience. This is the simplest form of sympathetic laughter: a laughing with, as unreflective and as good an example of unconscious imitation as are the movements made while watching a fencer or bowler. Such group merriment is common. There need be nothing to laugh at; we are merely caught up in the swirl.

Less simple than this echoing laughter is responding

⁵ Malvolio in *Twelfth Night* and Sir Willoughby in *The Egoist* are examples. Professional and group vanities—"we military men"; "we artists," etc., and upstart vanities are favorite material for the comedy of character.

laughter, another and a higher type. Our being amused at human follies cannot be interpreted altogether as self-glorification or as a rebuke directed at anything unreasonable or anti-social. There is a bit of the fool or the knave in all of us, and a sneaking fondness for this fool wherever found. We enjoy sympathetically the gross feeder in Falstaff, the muddled idealist in Don Quixote, Sancho Panza the realist built close to the ground, Micawber the carefree, and Tanner the pursued. We all have a tilt or two with windmills or build castles in the air. The romantic gilding that changes a country wench to a Dulcinea is the ready practice of every lover.

It may be said of such advanced sympathetic laughter that it (1) lacks the resonance of *touch and go* laughter; (2) is marked by indulgent understanding; (3) involves feelings of wide range, superficial, easily detached and shifted; (4) presupposes an alert and versatile imagination because an unoriginal person of strong, grooved emotions, who is one thing and cannot imagine himself anything else, is not a laugher of this type; (5) cannot be explained in terms of an "instinct of self-debasement."

LAUGHTER AS A SOCIAL REBUKE

This theory retains the gregariousness of laughter, tends to exclude the emotional, and gives a new socialized and intellectualized reading of the comic. Whatever endangers our common social life provokes a gesture of protest; if society is sure of itself and the danger is not too great, the gesture is one of playful ridicule; with a deepening apprehension, the laughter becomes sharply pointed; when the danger is great, it is embittered, yields to truculent satire or to aggressive practical measures.

Of the two representatives of this theory, Meredith and

Bergson, Meredith offers the simpler variant. He holds our social life to be an achievement made possible by individual self-discipline and the development of a cooperative spirit. Some impulses must be blocked and others are in need of refinement; the individual's whole life must be raised to the level of rational control; and there must be a "harnessing" and pulling together at a common task. Two dangers are to be guarded against: a slipping back to a lower level of primitive impulses and undisciplined feelings, and an individual fractiousness which means the breaking of the social harness, and a bolt. There is an early "rawness" in Falstaff's guzzling, gluttony, and uncontrolled sex life, which is rebuked by the *comic spirit*—that critical warning voice of commonsense. The obstinate man, the man of conceit, the sentimentalist, the moon-calf all show a lack of sobriety, of mental balance, and of regard for the checking value of facts, which make them a menace to themselves and to an enlightened society as well. Nor can the swindler, the boor, the hypocrite, the fop, the pedant, the rake, the greedy lawyer, the shallow society woman be said to be playing the social game as Meredith would have it played—in a spirit of sustained kindness and give and take; they are disrupting influences to be guarded against by laughter.

Bergson, like Meredith, interprets laughter as a gesture in defence of social unity; a discrediting by means of ridicule of anything that might swing the individual out of line with his fellows. But when he comes to state what society needs and what it must save itself from he substitutes alertness and resourcefulness for Meredith's consideration and sane-mindedness, and mechanization for backsliding. His theory takes its clue from the contrast between life, an individual, flexible, non-repeating process, and matter, which is inert, non-flexible, reversible in its combining.

Society, a living thing, is exposed to all manner of mech-

anizing influences. Our institutions harden, our speech tends to become parrot talk, and our conduct turns to mere mimicry; we run along the wire of our class or in the groove of a mechanized intellect and will of our own. Society cannot afford such mechanization; it needs flexible forms and alert, adaptable individuals. The awkward man shows absentmindedness in stumbling and stiffness in falling; it is mental sluggishness that snares the victim of the practical joker. The man who flounders about and muddles things lacks sharpness and resourcefulness; the individual who sets himself apart in dress, in manner, in speech—the queer man in short—is blocking, consciously, or unconsciously, the game of social give and take. Small wonder then that they are all laughed at, and in being laughed at are rebuked in the simplest and least expensive way open to society.

Group laughter of this disciplinary type is common and often does good service in keeping down eccentricities and in furthering a life of social accord. But there is a great deal of laughter which is neither thoughtful nor corrective. It cannot be thrown aside as being farcical. Far from being well mannered, much of it is none too squeamish—a sympathetic sharing of experiences running counter to what is most highly prized in a cultured society. It might be suggested that the comic of this type has the social value of allowing an imaginative outlet for such gross and primitive appetites as cannot be destroyed but are forced back, and of thus guarding against too brittle a refinement, moral and intellectual. This would point to the theory that laughter is a relief from inhibitions; and that theory has its own difficulties.

There are two objections to Bergson's position. The mechanical is not necessarily the anti-social. Efficiency in group life is in great part a matter of economy, and economy is gained among other things by extensive mechanization.

Settled habits, established beliefs and traditions, fixed policies are needed as stabilizing forces. Again, laughter often fails to discriminate between non-conformity that is bad and non-conformity that is good; and thus itself becomes a mechanical, reactionary thing. Caricature, when it is not merely playful, uses ridicule as a rebuke. It is a defensive measure by means of which the group maintains itself at a certain level. Whoever falls below that level is greeted with laughter. But so are often those who seek to rise above it. None of the great reform movements have been welcomed by the caricaturist; he has again and again ridiculed men and women who for the sake of a larger life have broken down barriers of class or sex. Here lies a weakness in Bergson's theory; he fails to see that society is composed of many groups of clannish interests, and that each group, jealous of its narrow circle, employs laughter defensively, and at the cost, often, of greater social values. A bourgeois group laughs at one of its members who steps out of the circle; yet there is nothing either mechanical or anti-social in his ambition; rather is the laughter mechanical and opposed to a progressive social life.

Meredith and Bergson alike fail to give full value to sympathetic laughter; and they overlook altogether the laughter of relief.

LAUGHTER AS A RELIEF

Laughter on its physical side is often a form of relief. Emotional tension is relieved by hysterical laughter. In smiling or laughing we relax, let ourselves go, work off and rid ourselves of "black humours" and taut nerves.

The comic may be explained in terms of relief from three classes of restraints:—conventional, sexual, and logical.

CONVENTIONAL SOCIAL RESTRAINTS: For the sake of

smooth living together society has developed a routine of manners and morals. We must eat and dress in certain ways; carry our religion to church and home again; give our economic and moral beliefs the approved cut. We must be good carpenters or professional men; good heads of families; good citizens. We are set within an orderly scheme. All this means being restrained, conventionalized, institutionalized. If the individual is nothing and can be nothing other than this routine, well and good! he will be an estimable, non-laughing member of his community. But if he has a little originality, imagination, and initiative he may balk at the restraint and become a rebel. Rebellion of the practical type, however, means courage and sustained effort, and is bound to prove costly. There is another and a cheaper way: relief through laughter. When I catch myself becoming a creature of habit or discover society standardizing dress, diet, religion, patriotism, I seek a momentary release through amused laughter from a routine which is gradually shaping my life whether I will it or no. There may be aggressive wit in my thrust—with a naked or a buttoned point—or satire, bitter or genial, or a freeing smile.

SEXUAL RESTRAINTS: A special set of restraints are those concerning physical needs and facts of sex. A developing society achieves and asks: (1) refinement in speech and in methods of living—the grosser bodily facts are either hidden from view or carried over into the context of aesthetic, moral, and scientific meanings; (2) a more considerate as well as a more delicate manner of living—others must not be insulted by gross actions and allusions; (3) personal ideals of purity and “cleanness”; (4) a self-discipline on the part of the individual which causes him to assign to his sex life a minor rôle. With the removal of these four restraints four types of comic emerge:—(1') coarse practical

jokes; reference to bodily functions and sexual organs; (2') intentional indelicacies and brutalities; shocking stories; (3') smutty stories; obscenities; (4') a welter of sex allusions; a reveling in an exaggerated sex life.

It seems plausible to argue that in all these cases laughter is a matter of relief. We become gross for the sake of a return to primitive nature; we tell shocking stories in an attack on the eternal refinement of others; or to slip out of our own refinement; we enjoy smut as a camper enjoys dirt; we indulge imaginatively in a stress on sex, which we no longer allow ourselves in real life.

LOGICAL RESTRAINTS: What is called fooling or foolery is a disregard of reasonable sequences among words and ideas, and of sensible conduct. At times we rebel against what has been slowly and painfully acquired through experience—this logical restraint in ourselves and our neighbors. Why be so “damnably reasonable”? we say. There is a desire to gamble, to throw things in confusion; to indulge in disorderly thinking, to return to an early irrationality still manifest in dreams, to take a slap at the all too composed face of reason. Certain forms of the comic—non-sense rhymes, absurd combinations of words or ideas, as in *Alice in Wonderland*—may be interpreted as a momentary enjoyable release from logic.

The theory that laughter is a relief from restraints conventional, sexual, and logical has points in its favor. But it interprets the comic in too narrow and negative a fashion. Gross jokes and sex references are enjoyed for their own sake by peasant and city dweller alike when there is none of the restraint the violation of which is the purpose of many sophisticated obscenities. Rabelaisian humor, as it flourishes in our smoking rooms, is in large part a release from decency, but neither Rabelais himself nor our enjoyment of his type of the comic can wholly be accounted for in terms of revolt. Again, logical restraints are hardly strong

enough to be troublesome. Clear speech and straight thinking are about the last thing the individual expects of himself or society expects of him. The discipline of life allows a liberal margin of disorderly thinking. The positive factor which this theory neglects is that of *playful caprice*.

THE LAUGHTER OF PLAYFUL CAPRICE

Rodin somewhere speaks of a "vagabondage of fancy." The phrase may serve to mark a frequent motif in the creation and enjoyment of the comic. A tramp need not be a rebel; he may be merely a rover. Systematic topsyturvyism such as is to be found in *Alice in Wonderland*, Butler's *Erewhon*, Barrie's *The Admirable Crichton* and *A Kiss for Cinderella* is a mixture of relief from accepted values and a free roving. The caricaturist plays capriciously with lines, and the comic dancer tilts and tumbles the lines of his body. Mr. Dooley has his sport with language and current events; Lewis Carrol knocks ideas about. In all these instances it is the irresponsible laughter who enjoys the irresponsible game. Illustrations may be had from such different sources as Thackeray and Rabelais. Thackeray delighted in whimsical invention of names and crazy spelling; there are many clownish touches in his letters and marginal drawings. When during his stay in Boston he shouted and danced on hearing that all the tickets for his first lecture were sold, and insisted on sticking his long legs out of the carriage window he was simply cutting capers. The contrast to his usual gentlemanliness and to Boston decorum adds to the amusement, but the heart of the matter is a boyishness which appeals to the boy that is in most men. Rabelais is a mine of laughter of this sort. He strings words together, piles up variants, throws words on the page by the shovel, tosses ideas about, takes a question like Married or

Single? and plays with it till nothing is left but nonsense, caprice, and high spirits.

FREUD'S THEORY

No single descriptive term serves here: Freud offers a medley of explanations which includes *relief*, *play*, *malice*, *sympathy*, and *economy*. His book *Wit and the Unconscious* presents a highly specialized theory of wit followed by a more or less tentative and muddled treatment of the comic. He connects both with the unconscious. It is here that his theory is most original and suggestive, and most questionable. He gains vantage ground for far-reaching observations and shrewd comments, but he pays a heavy price—for the streams of psycho-analysis run muddy in a double sense: they are neither clear nor clean.

Our waking adult life, according to Freud, is an achievement made possible by a discipline of impulses which suppresses, for the sake of an orderly use of words and ideas and a decorous way of living, the early loose play and experimentation of childhood (pp. 190–191) and the libidinous aggressive longings which lurk in our subconsciousness. Dream-work is a plunge into infantile memories and an evasion of the censors, reason and morality. Similarly, wit-work is a way of recovering a child's "free disposal of his mental stream" and of escaping or breaking through restraints. In the jest and in *harmless wit* the pleasure gained is chiefly that of nonsense-play.⁶ In *tendency-wit*—obscene, hostile, cynical, blasphemous, as the case may be—relief is sought from restraints put on sex impulses and on

⁶ "It is quite obvious that it is easier and more convenient to turn away from a definite trend of thought than to stick to it; it is easier to mix up different things than to distinguish them; and it is particularly easier to travel over modes of reasoning unsanctioned by logic; finally in connecting words or thoughts it is especially easy to overlook the fact that such connections should result in sense." (Freud, *Wit and the Unconscious*.)

aggression, and their masked satisfaction is made possible. Here is one of Freud's illustrations. Two rich, unscrupulous business men have had their portraits painted. They hold an elaborate reception. An expert, asked to pass judgment on the pictures, looks at them and then at the vacant space between and asks: "And where is the Saviour?" This clever, indirect insult is cited as an example of hostile wit. (cf. also pp. 148-153).

When he turns to the question of the pleasure-sources of wit Freud encounters difficulties. *Tendency-wit* is held to involve removal—or relief-pleasure; and even *harmless wit* is explained at times as a pleasurable recovery of old liberties. But wit is held also to involve the pleasure of "gratifying tendencies"—the regaining of an early delight in irresponsible play, sexuality, and pugnacity. The situation turns out to be even more complex. It is not enough to talk nonsense to rid oneself of the censorship of orderly thinking and to recover an infantile source of enjoyment; the nonsense must be wittily disguised. Here is a third cause of pleasure: in the technique—the clever manipulation of words and ideas. Freud is not consistent or clear in working out the relations of the pleasure of *relief*, of *play*, of *technique*. He seeks refuge in vague phrases such as: "wit-pleasure shows a kernel of the original play-pleasure and a shell of removal-pleasure." To make matters worse, he puts a vacillating stress on the pleasure of a flattering comparison—the superiority motif. Again, influenced by Lipps, he uses the terms *expenditure of psychic energy* and *economy* widely and uncritically. "It has seemed to us that the pleasure of wit originates from an economy of expenditure in inhibition, of the comic from an economy of expenditure in thought, and of humor from an economy of expenditure in feeling. All three activities of our psychic apparatus derive pleasure from economy. They all strive to bring back from the psychic activity a pleasure which has really been

lost in the development of that activity. For the euphoria which we are thus striving to obtain is nothing but the state of a bygone time in which we were wont to defray our psychic work with slight expenditure. It is the state of our childhood in which we did not know the comic, were incapable of wit and did not need humor to make us happy." (p. 384) It is true that our enjoyment of the comic owes something to playful ease in the use of words; that in certain types of wit we spare ourselves the pain of self-reproach or the *ricochet* of an insult; that in humor we save ourselves the pain of sympathy.⁷ There is a pleasurable lessening of psychic work according to Freud; a special instance of which is what he calls the *condensation-technique of wit*. But with the collapse of an inhibition there is also made available, made superfluous, *economized*, a corresponding amount of energy; and the consciousness of this free energy is held to be pleasurable. Freud needs both sources for his theory and makes the term psychic economy cover both; which is like not distinguishing a man who is conscious of saving from a man who suddenly finds himself rich. The confusion is worse in Freud's theory of the comic. When we watch the exaggerated gesture of a clown or a child writing with his tongue as well as with his hands we are said to laugh at the "excessive expenditure of energy" which we in like circumstances should save. (p. 304) The contrast between infantile and adult self, stressed again and again, is of little use.

ANOTHER BIOLOGICAL THEORY

A bit of analysis may serve at the start. I walk upstairs and make a last, unnecessary step at the head of the stairs;

⁷ McDougall has developed independently a theory of the comic in terms of an economy in the painfulness of sympathetic experiences. The play of our sympathetic impulses would be too painful, were it not for the safety device of laughter.

I laugh, and it is not at the mechanically continued stepping but at the sudden collapse of an uncalled for motor adjustment. I stoop to pick up a coin and discover it to be a piece of tin. Or a strong man appears on the stage. He tenses himself, picks up a weight and purposely lets it drop; the thump and clatter are to impress me with its weight. He selects a larger one and lifts it slowly with every sign of great physical stress. This effort of his I share with incipient adjustments of my muscles. He gets it to the height of his chin; then all of a sudden his arm shoots out straight, and the enormous weight hangs suspended on a finger. Cardboard painted black!—I laugh—I have been tricked into sharing in and admiring a great show of strength which turns out to be a fraud. In all three cases there is: (1) an interested response; (2) a needless, uncalled for motor adjustment; (3) the sense of a jolt. Ordinarily human expectations are bound up with desires and with the practical demands of situations. The tentative unsure movements of a child in reaching for or lifting things show that an economically adjusted kinetic response to situations is a gradual achievement made possible by the discipline of experience. Such growing efficiency is paralleled by more definitely pointed purposes and expectations. A deviation from what is expected allows a sense of jolt to appear. The more deeply and definitely our interest is engaged the more sharply will this thwarting be felt.

In adult life there is a circle of things that matter a great deal—things to which we are committed by our effort and expectations; and beyond this circle there is a vague world which we feel no need of construing practically or adjusting ourselves to. To me there is a difference between drawing a check or finishing this book and a flight to the North Pole or ascent of Mount Everest. The latter do not call out effort or commit my expectations—and so I do not resent or feel a jolt at an incalculable element. If I were to

regard this circular band as an unalterably fixed boundary line I should be making a serious mistake, for circumstances might make the proposed polar flight very much of a concern of mine. Life shifts its lines, and the circle expands or contracts. Alertness and resourcefulness are necessary. Bergson is right in discovering in corrective laughter an instinctive distrust of inefficiency in the ever changing adjustments of individual and social life.

There are, however, playful and sympathetic laughter to be reckoned with; and they make possible a biological theory of laughter which differs markedly from Bergson's. There is in all of us in so far as we are serious-minded an inclination to take all things seriously—to have the circular band stretch around the goodly girth of life. If we were to act out this *will to efficiency* completely we should limit ourselves to something like the taking of synthetic food pills, the reading of instructive books, and a practical assimilation and use of facts; we should practise the utmost economy of word and deed. In such a world there would be no play and no mirth; we should not even find the correcting of others enjoyable. Fortunately such an ideal is unattainable. There is in all living a *safety margin of inefficiency*, and beyond that there is a *will to waste*. To impose and to carry out as a crusader a single religious, moral or scientific program or in a spirit of economy to pare all things down to the quick is to overstep this margin of safety. To be able to smile at our convictions and, while moralists, to imagine sympathetically and playfully worlds of other codes and looser pattern is to save ourselves from the bigotry of assuming that life can be handled efficiently and in our one way only. Laughter is one of nature's safety devices. Its point of view is the all too human, none too perfect, all too unexpected. This extravagance, disconcerting to the directly-minded, ultimately makes for sanity. To suggest that is to give a larger reading to the will to efficiency; life if not to be mastered can at

least be managed by keeping a laugh in reserve. But there is more to laughter than this broader usefulness, for it expresses a *will to waste*. Waste, sheer, unredeemable by reason or moral feeling, is inherent in the process of living. Much of it is ugly; some of it is highly enjoyable.

There is in our amusements something of the exuberant, carefree spirit of play; they involve a slackening of tension or working off of surplus energy which in the long run may prove beneficial. It is not, however, as careful investors that we amuse ourselves; nor does life in allowing us our fun seem to be aiming at a wholesome balance of work and play. Discipline and measure are lacking. We do not care how much we spend or how far we are carried; for the moment seriousness of purpose is suspended in us, and the world may go as it pleases. There is much of this spend-thrift spirit in laughter. When I take that last unnecessary step or a broader jump than was needed it is not a sense of power spent and misspent that makes the experience amusing; it is the sheer waste of effort which is enjoyed sympathetically. I have fallen in step with nature in one of her drunken moods of random sportive stepping. There is no wastrel like the sense of the comic. In its development it is often connected with bibulous waste of time; its technique is not, like that of the beautiful, one of economy—even the condensation Freud finds in wit is a needless exaction of quick and ingenious thinking. It gives without stint of itself and does not care what company it keeps. Not even itself does it take seriously. Has it not always been, in its relations to reform movements as well as in its playful expressions, a *jump beyond the efficient and the decorous*, and an enjoyment of its own heedlessness? Admit with Bergson that it may be corrective, but insist that it is incorrigible; that it is lavish and wasteful like life itself; that it is the voice of our perverse pleasure in playing the part of irresponsibles in a game too wayward for any set of rules of efficiency and too

capricious in spirit not to trick our expectations again and again.

Such a theory must not be taken too seriously if the safety margin of possible error is not to be overstepped. Unsound theories of the comic are greeted with laughter, but even sound theories are in danger. With characteristic abandon the comic spirit of mankind keeps a laugh in reserve for all formulas of, at least, its mental life, for it sees little of its will to waste in their orderly and parsimonious logic.

THE TECHNIQUE OF THE COMIC

So far our concern has been with the origins, motives, and biological meanings of the comic. Motives have been found for the creation and enjoyment of the comic in self-glorification; in an instinctive defence against the anti-social; in a flooding sympathy; in play; in guarding against too intense and painful a functioning of sympathetic impulses; in relief from inhibitions; in the safe indulgence of masked hostility or cruelty; in a contrast between adult and child life or between energy innervated and energy needed; in freedom and a sense of lordship over something that does not matter and still does matter; in a sympathetic response to the wayward and wasteful moods of life.

For aesthetics there are further problems. The comic artist uses certain materials; he gains his effects by means of certain devices. Materials and technique must be studied.

There is an endless variety of comic material in art and in life. Lines, forms, movements, characters, situations, mental states, ideas, variously compounded are utilized in a story, a farce, a comedy, a cartoon, a scherzo, a grotesquerie in drawing or dancing.

With reference to this material it may be said that (1) nothing in life is inherently funny; (2) some things provoke laughter more easily than others; (3) there is nothing

that cannot be made laughable. (1') Not even everything "mechanical encrusted on the living"—Bergson's formula—is comic. (2') There are faces, situations, characters that make us laugh more readily than others. (3') The comic is no respecter of noble forms or precious feelings; it excludes nothing, not even blasphemy or moral filth. It uses devices by means of which everything in life, however lofty, repulsive, socially prized—religion, murder, marriage—is made available for laughter.

No study of the comic can afford to neglect this problem of technique. Every artist, from Aristophanes down to Aldous Huxley or Charlie Chaplin has his own favorite comic effects and bagful of tricks. But in this endless variety there are recurrent types of method and effect which repay analysis.

MECHANIZATION

Bergson's lead must be followed in accepting mechanization as one of the commonest devices used. It in turn depends for its effects largely on repetition and on stressing the rigid. The caricaturist, for example, catches a twist in the lines of the face, a set expression, a cast of character, a mannerism of gesture or dress and fixes and bears down on them to the utter disregard of everything else. Dickens effectively mechanizes through repetition: witness the cork-like buoyancy of Micawber; the Fat Boy dropping off to sleep; the rapid stereotyped talk of Jingle; the tears of Mr. Trotter, to be turned on and off like water-works. The comic writer often makes his characters act and speak like puppets. He pulls the strings, and a fat person rolls on the stage or a grand air and grand clothes strut in, a stiff person creaks ominously as he tries to unbend, excited individuals whirl about like tops. Motives, too, are mechanized to such a degree that they suggest clockwork.

Among the best examples of mechanization in the service of the comic are the *Mr. Pinhead* sketches of Cami (*L'Homme à la tête d'épingle*). In the *Drunkard's Child* there are stock phrases and characters of a melodrama: the poor seamstress, the drunken brute, the frail child. Murder is made funny, and the comic reaches its height in the child's exultant cry to his mother: "*Sois heureuse, papa est carbonisé.*" In the *Calabrian Brigand Turned Dumb* a brigand suddenly loses his power of speech. His daughter buys a phonograph and tells him all he need do is to sit in his accustomed place near the forest and have it repeat, "Your money or your life!" After a wait of seven hours in the rain, an old man appears; the phonograph is set going; but the old man steps up with a benevolent look on his face, gives the brigand a coin and says, "Don't trouble yourself, my good man, I am deaf." The brigand disconsolately goes home, saying to himself, "He could not hear my challenge, so, of course, I could not rob him." In *Little Green Riding Hood* there is the same use of mechanization. The wolf, being a well regulated, fairy tale property wolf, cannot eat the little girl because she does not give him his cue, "Grandmother, what big teeth you have!" Again and again she goes through the rigmarole of questions, but always stops short at that point. The wolf tries prompting her, but finally gives up in disgust, with the reflection, "Ah, where are the children of yesterday, so naïve and so easy to devour?"

In all these sketches an absurdly mechanized world is presented, a world unlike that of our ordinary ideas, our fluctuating feelings, and our adjusted responses. Were it not for the contrast the mechanized world would not appear funny. Bergson recognizes this in his phrase *the mechanical encrusted on the living*. But what he fails to see is the presence of sympathetic laughter. The mechanized wolf is funny, but so is Little Green Riding Hood assuming the

disguise of the mechanical and impishly outwitting the wolf. In like fashion we enjoy sympathetically the one thing in Falstaff which is not mechanized: his nimble wit with its unpredictable sallies.

Why are physical exaggerations—huge bulk, a long nose, large ears—funny? Bergson somewhat fantastically explains them in terms of matter losing touch with mind and absentmindedly marching on. A man is to us a being of many moods, of many free answers to life; but how can we think of this man as a romantic or heroic figure?—his paunch is in the way or his nose is a mechanical obstacle in the path of sentiment or passion. They are jokes at his expense. If we are irreverent and think of them as a joke played upon him by God, we may laugh sympathetically with the cosmic joker. The caricaturist who draws a nose to absurd lengths depends in part on exaggeration as a direct source of laughter, but he also counts on an empathetic enjoyment of his playful caprice. In *Cyrano* there is a double response of this kind: we laugh with Rostand at Cyrano, and we laugh with Cyrano at his long nose. The dramatist and his hero make so much of this nose, play variants on it, pelt it with similes, that we laugh not at the absentmindedness of matter but at the capering and the whimsical self-depreciation. Cyrano is a romantic and heroic figure in spite of his nose; and he is a comic one not simply because of his nose, but because he invites us to join in the laugh on himself.⁸ Socrates showed a similar spirit when he undertook to prove his face with its assembled home-

⁸ A case in point is the following (*Henry IV, Act I, sc. 2*):

FALSTAFF:—Men of all sorts take a pride to gird at me! the brain of the foolish-compounded clay, man, is not able to invent anything that tends to laughter, more than I invent or is invented on me. I am not only witty in myself, but the cause that wit is in other men, (turning to his diminutive page) I do here walk before thee like a sow that hath overwhelmed all her litter but one.

liness—bulging eyes, upturned nose, large mouth—was beautiful.

SURPRISING TURNS

Startling surprises, unexpected jolts, explosive effects have come to be recognized as part of the technique of the comic. Examples may be found in

(a) GRAPHIC FORMS: The comic draughtsman makes his lines do surprising things. They march along sedately, but suddenly stumble or start off afield. They are twisted about and combined to a distorted image—an image as striking and unlooked for as are reflections in faulty glass or a concave mirror.

(b) VERBAL FORMS: Occasional misspelling, queer prefixes and endings, monstrous compounds like *alcoholidays*, *famillionaire*, sentences built awry, unexpected verse endings are examples. Aristophanes is very ingenious in his use of comic devices of this type.

(c) SITUATIONS: In slapstick comedy and farce, mix-ups and surprises are frequent. People turn up and things happen at the most unexpected moments: our expectations are led a merry dance in a world which does not lend itself to prediction. The characters, it is true, are mechanized and give the impression of being puppets, but they move about in a playfully irrational world. A man enters a room and hangs hat and coat on a hook in the wall, only to see them glide up to the ceiling; he draws a chair to the dinner table, and the chair moves back and sends him sprawling; he tries another and another until he gets one that does not move back—notice that we laugh as heartily at the chair that unexpectedly proves serviceable as we do at the others—he seats himself, and the table trots off with his

dinner. He is in a world unfamiliar, not to be depended on. Here is not a case of absentmindedness rebuked by laughter; no one can be expected to guard against a world of this sort. The man who boils his watch and looks at the egg in his hand is absentminded; not so, however, the man who dips his pen in the mud a practical joker has put in his inkwell—the example is Bergson's. We laugh at both, but for different reasons. To be constantly on guard against practical jokes and to dread all manner of probable mishaps is merely to be *jumpy*; and it is hardly to the advantage of society to encourage jumpiness. It is the surprising turn to a de-rationalized world of jolts and bewilderment which is counted on to produce laughter.

INVERSION

Inversion, turning things about or upside down is a favorite comic device. *Verkehrte Welt!* It may be in the service of merriment or satire; it may be systematic *topsy-turvyism*, as in Butler's *Erewhon* and *Erewhon Revisited* or in Barrie's *Admirable Crichton* or it may be casual and incidental. When it is systematic it substitutes for the common world either an elaborately patterned absurdity or a counterpart which turns out to be less absurd than it seemed. A trick photograph which shows an acrobat holding up an elephant with one hand is an example of the first. To the second class belongs Butler's suggestion that instead of pitying the sick and punishing the criminal we ought to pity the criminal and punish the sick; an inversion which is more plausible than it looks.

An example of inversion of phrase is the exclamation of the corpse in the *Frogs*, "Strike me alive if I do!"; of in-

version of ideas, the landlord begging his tenant to submit to a reduction in rent; of inversion of situation, the Induction to *The Taming of the Shrew*, with Sly the Tinker turned into a lord.

CONTRAST AND CONTRADICTION

Contrast is used to strengthen or create comic effects. A tall man is set off by a short one, and the diminutive page adds several inches to Falstaff's girth. Systematized contrast marks *Gulliver's Travels*. Lilliputia is the world seen through the other end of a telescope; in it everything is drawn to scale, but the scale contrasts sharply with what we are familiar with.

It is but a step from contrast to contradiction. Snug the Joiner impersonating a lion and letting his nails grow long to serve as claws is funny; but when he leaves half his head uncovered, speaks reassuringly to the ladies and calls forth the remark, "A very gentle beast and of a good conscience," he becomes comic because he is lion and not-lion at the same time. Impersonations of animals on the stage depend largely for their effects on such a rapid interchange or incongruous simultaneity of man and beast. In characters and words, as well as in situations, contraction is often used. Imagine a miser who suffers from distressing lapses of generosity which he in vain seeks to control, and you have a character at comic odds with himself. Puns depend on the double meaning of words. While there is nothing laughable in a word having two meanings, there is much chance for laughter if they are embodied in a sentence with a squinting reference to either. But this spinning back and forth between contrasted or opposed meanings explains puns only in part; there is in addition much blackening or cheapening.

CHEAPENING

A caricatured face is a degraded face: by a slight shifting of lines and a touch of exaggeration it has been made uglier, weaker, more base than it was. Comic drawings which make heads look like pumpkins or pears, lean men like pencils, and stout men like sacks of flour are examples of such cheapening. In parodies enough of the original form and substance is kept to get a sort of swinging memory of values, to be smashed into and insidiously turned worthless again and again. In the *Heptalogia* Swinburne parodies his trick of alliteration; and pokes fun at Whitman's pantheism and kinship universal by having the carpenter and the woodlouse fraternize.

Poe's *The Raven* is recalled and debased in these verses from *The Vultures*:

"Smith!" I shriek'd—the accent humbler dropping as another tumbler

I beheld him mix, "be off! you drive me mad—it's striking four.
Leave the house and something in it; if you go on with the gin it
Won't hold out another minute. Leave the house and shut the
door—

Take your beak from out my gin, and take your body through the
door!"

Quoth the vulture, "Never more!"

And the vulture never flitting—still is sitting, still is sitting,
Gulping down my stout by gallons, and my oysters by the score;
And the beast, with no more breeding than a heathen savage feeding,
The new carpet's tints unheeding, throws his shells upon the floor.
And his smoke from out my curtains, and his stains from out my
floor,

Shall be sifted never more!

In burlesques of the Middle Ages, such as those of Thackeray and Mark Twain, there is a swift passing to and fro

between the ultra-modern and the medieval. Contrasts and contradictions are skilfully used. Sir Galahad is summoned by telephone; knights in clanking armor are mounted on bicycles. But there is also a playful discrediting of the whole theatrical knighthood business. When Leech in the *Comic History of England* draws a Queen Elizabeth smirking in all the discomforts of a medieval costume or a beefy Henry the Eighth strutting with his hat on a slant and a lady other than fair on his arm, he is having his fun with royalty. A sense of contradiction alone does not explain why I laugh when on hearing a noise in the cupboard I open the door, expecting to find the cat, and discover my aunt or father-in-law. The example and this explanation are Herkenrath's. It is better to follow the suggestion of Lipps that the comic results from a sudden lowering of human dignity—debasing, in short. The more dignified my aunt is, the more seriously she takes that dignity and the more playfully and triflingly I regard it, the funnier will the situation seem.

EXAGGERATION, INFLATION, DEFLATION

The caricaturist exaggerates the irregularities of a face; the writer of farce puts within the frame of an evening's entertainment a set of freakish characters, and pictures life as wilder, more incalculable than it is; the artist in the comic of words twists them and pulls them about. There is a frank note of excess, of extravaganza, in Aristophanes' *Birds*, the verbal fire-works of Rabelais, the characters in Anatole France's *At the Sign of the Reine Pédauque*, the novels of Dickens and the drawings of Busch, Van Vechten's *The Blind Bow Boy*, and Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay*.

Inflation is a special type of exaggeration aimed at cheapening. Bombast, mouthing, and ranting are used to gain

the effect of the mock heroic. When Fielding describes in Homeric language a brawl among women he gives to it a dignity and an importance out of keeping with its ugliness and pettiness, and thus makes it appear low, but he has his fling at Homer as well:—a clear case of double cheapening. This puts us within sight of deflation, which is in essence bubble-pricking. In an old fable a frog tries to blow himself up to the size of an ox and bursts. A common human temptation to become puffed up, overblown, inflated with pride or pretence gives the comic writer his chance—he assists in the blowing up, then deftly inserts a pin, and *presto!* the voluminous pomp, with a bang, turns to nothing.

THE LET DOWN OF EXPECTATION

In the examples given, a sudden collapse, a deflation, was used for purposes of discrediting—of a critical reduction of the extravagant to the common or the reasonable.

There is, however, another technical use of a sudden collapse to nothingness. It may be called the let down of expectation. We expect the big, and the little is given us; we anticipate the important and are confronted with the trifling; we look for orderly forms, sensible sequences and characters, and there are palmed off on us discarded images, mix ups, and freakish men and women. We are all set for the thing we do not get, and the thing we do get is a trifle. This is the Kantian formula of an unexpected turn to nothing. The device is common. A man takes a tremendous running start and then jumps a foot; a huge man becomes articulate in mincing speech or piping treble; a vice becomes a bagatelle, an upheaval turns out to be a tempest in a teapot. Our expectations are tensed and then slackened. These things are funny apart from any hint of corrective

criticism. Nor need they be, although they often are, a sort of cheapening of themselves. Playful variants are common in music ⁹ and dancing.

This analysis of the comic is an incomplete one. *Mechanization, surprising turns, inversion, contrast and contradiction, cheapening, exaggeration, inflation, deflation, and the let down of expectation* are merely the chief means of gaining comic effects; not only may these be variously compounded and combined, but there are others.

ALLIED TYPES: HUMOR, SATIRE, WIT

The comic is as broad as life; within this, its realm, it is as gross or as subtle, as simple or as complex, as the mind which reflects and enjoys it; its guises are many and variously proportioned; and its appeal is to many motives. Thus the jest, the droll story, the scherzo carry an appeal to merriment; *fooling* and the *patter* of a vaudeville team combine the playful with the illogical and with the pull and release of expectation; farce and practical jokes pivot on exaggeration and casual malice; burlesque means cheapening.

There are three mixed, major types: *humor, satire, wit*, which move partly within and partly without the circle of the comic.

⁹ Penkert in a paper *Die Musikalische Formung von Witz und Humor* (*Kongress für Aesthetik und Allgemeine Kunstwissenschaft*) accepts Lipps' theory of the comic and seeks to discover in song and in tone-structures instances of the sudden collapse of an expectation keyed up to something important. His first example is that of a melody sustained by quiet, massive rhythms reaching great heights only to slide down suddenly to the depths of a single low note emphatically struck. His second example is that of a melody seeking a goal, tentatively, nervously, and striking a wholly unexpected, incongruous note. (Chopin's *Mazurka in F-dur*). Penkert admits that such transitions may be used for purposes other than the comic, and suggests that in order to be funny they must impress us with a certain playfulness. Sportiveness, caprice, surprising turns, contradictions, cheapening are all used by him in his analysis of comic musical forms.

HUMOR

It is in character drawing that humor achieves its greatest triumphs. Four outstanding humorous portraits are Falstaff, Trunnion, Pickwick, and Micawber. They reveal the following marks of humor:

A NOTE OF EXTRAVAGANCE; OF ODDITY ON A LARGE SCALE: Each of these characters moves within an eccentric orbit of bodily appearance, manner, and speech: witness Falstaff's girth and talk redolent of grease; Trunnion's one eye, sea swagger, and salted speech; Pickwick's dumpiness; Micawber's way of making punch and talking finance. These oddities are struck with a gesture so sweeping and a touch so emphatic as to remove these men to the realm of the uncommon and the fantastic. Such an extravagance is an inseparable part of humor. Trunnion is a good example. Old sea-dog that he is, he lives in his house as though it were a man-of-war, has his servants stand watch, affects the roughness and punctilio of an old time commodore, and cannot, even on his death-bed, speak otherwise than in the jargon and imagery of sea-faring.¹⁰

A FREENESS AND BOLDNESS OF CONCEPTION RESULTING IN FORMLESSNESS AND A PECULIAR IMAGINATIVE QUALITY: The humorist lords it over his creatures; goes about his work in a wholehearted unabashed way; and gets full imaginative value from the gullibility and childlike benevolence of Pickwick, and the animalism, nimble wit, and glorious cowardice of Falstaff. His characters in turn assert themselves freely

¹⁰ He addresses weeping Peregrine thus: "Swab the spray from off your bowsprit, my good lad, and coil up your spirits. You must not let the toplifts of your heart give way, because you see me ready to go down at these years; many a better man has foundered before he has made half my way; tho I trust, by the mercy of God, I shall be sure in port in a very few glasses, and fast moored in a most blessed riding—"

Wemmick's Castle in *Great Expectations* and the elder Weller's letter telling of the death of his wife offer parallels.

and masterfully in the imaginary world within which he has set them: there is something of the sublime in the way they carry themselves, in their self-assurance and utter spontaneity. They are not puppet-like in their actions. It is here that the mechanization theory of Bergson breaks down. To mechanize character is to flatten it imaginatively and to lose part of its appeal; this is a sacrifice the humorist refuses to make; he holds it his business to bend a deepening and spreading imagination to the reading of character as a bit of life. The life offered is not the calm reasonable one which is the *beau idéal* of Molière's comedies; it is somewhat formless and is deepened in its appeal by an admixture of bold imagery and ideas, and poignant feelings. Humorists, with few exceptions, incline toward formlessness.¹¹ Rabelais, Sterne, Jean Paul, Dickens are all disorderly imaginers; so is Anatole France for all his clear-cut style. They are all bold fashioners; nothing for them is too grotesque or extravagant. Falstaff, dying, sees a flea on Bardolph's nose and calls it "a black soul burning in hell-fire"—an example of imagination boldly striking out. There is also, here as well as in the second part of *Don Quixote* and the Fleet scenes of *Pickwick Papers* an emotional vibrancy and depth, in which there is part of the secret of humor.

A VIBRANT EMOTIONAL QUALITY, WHICH RESULTS FROM THE PRESENCE OF SYMPATHETIC LAUGHTER AND TRAGIC AND PATHETIC IMPLICATIONS: Again and again attention has been drawn to the emotionalized laughter of humor, its benign quality, its merriment mixed with tears, its ready and all comprehending pity. "To understand all is to forgive all" is a saying which illustrates this side of humor. But the matter is less simple than it appears to be. Sympa-

¹¹ Exceptions are Fielding, whose novels are kept orderly and cool by an opposition to Richardson and a desire to write close to everyday life; and Addison and Washington Irving, who have a decorous and quiet humor, with a slightly flat taste to it.

thetic laughter, as it is part of humor, implies not merely a larger and more tolerant reading of frailties and vices and an unwillingness to attach a moral stigma to them, but an imaginative experiencing with and sharing in, marked by *verve* and abandon. When Morgann, the critic, labored hard to absolve Falstaff from the charge of cowardice, he merely gave proof that he could not live within Falstaff's hide, as Shakespeare did for a time and meant us to do. This, by itself, again, cannot be made to explain the vibrant quality of humor, and the rich and deep effects it gains. The humorist, who has been one with his characters, disengages himself, shifts his ground, re-establishes distance but keeps the sense of kinship and kindliness, and reveals pathetic and tragic implications of which the characters and we, ordinarily are ignorant. Gargantua's sorrowing for his wife, mixed with good burgundy and a father's pride, and Trunnion's death ¹² illustrate this emotional deepening—what Meredith calls *the lights of tragedy* in laughter.

Humor looks upon life with a welcoming spirit, relishes the human all too human in vice and folly, and allows them to edge in on our sympathies. Satire holds them at arm's length and shakes or at least rebukes them, unless it is in one of its rarer playful moods. Costigan and Florac are

¹² His last moments, were, however, not so near as they imagined. He began to doze, and enjoyed small intervals of ease, till next day in the afternoon, during which remissions he was heard to pour forth many pious ejaculations, expressing his hope, that, for all the heavy cargo of his sins, he should be able to surmount the puttock-shrouds of despair, and get aloft to the crosstrees of God's good favour. At last his voice sunk so low as not to be distinguished; and, having lain about an hour, almost without any perceptible signs of life, he gave up the ghost with a groan, which announced his decease. (And then his servant Pipes exclaims): "Well fare thy soul! old Hawser Trunnion, man and boy I have known thee these five-and-thirty years, and sure a truer heart never broke biscuit. Many a hard gale hast thou weathered; but now thy spells are all over, and thy hull fairly laid up. A better commander I'd never desire to serve; and who knows I may help to set up thy standing rigging in another world?"—Surely a mariners' chorus and an echo of Trunnion himself!

humorous characters; the Old Campaigner is a satiric portrait.

A RE-ESTABLISHING OF HUMAN WORTH, WITH A PRO-VISO ATTACHED: There is more to humor than the sympathetic sharing of any and every experience however paltry, of boon companionship with any and every character however disreputable; there is more to it than *imaginative redemption* effected through the technique of genius.

Of the four characters mentioned, two, Trunnion and Pickwick, are wholly unconscious of the eccentric orbit in which they swing; while Falstaff enjoys and laughs at his. Certain followers of Hegel, building their argument on his interpretation of Falstaff, insist that a person cannot be comic to us unless he is so to himself; and they interpret the comic, and with it the humorous, in terms of the free human spirit indulging, relishing, and working off its endless caprice and its multitudinous littleness. Their restriction cannot be upheld:—the scene in which Trunnion flounders about, proposes, and swears in his blustering embarrassment is as truly humorous as is the recruiting scene in which Falstaff considers for service a choice collection of comic originals, knowing himself to be the colossal humbug of a soldier he is. But something may be made of their general theory. The humorist, like the tragic poet, is an explorer; but he is urged on by insatiable curiosity rather than by high courage. In his excursions into the paltry and the grotesque he seems to demolish or discredit everything that is felt to be worthwhile, and to reduce life to something as shapeless and useless as an old battered hat. Then, when we least expect it, he throws the light of something worthwhile on this twisted material and re-establishes worth by an appeal to feeling or to moral and intellectual values. Tears tremble in the laughter of Thackeray's *A Shabby Genteel Story* and a broad humanity quivers in the obscenity of Rabelais and

the irreverence of Anatole France; there are bright moral flakes, of kindness in Pickwick and of loyalty to his master in Sam Weller; Falstaff's wit is as appealing as it is unlooked for in so heavy a body. There is, however, this peculiarity about humor: it does not allow us to enjoy a final unruffled possession of such values; it turns us from Falstaff the wit to the feeder and sot, from Major Pendennis's worldly wisdom to his lord and dinner hunting, from Pickwick's golden heart to his hopeless figure. It plays to and fro between the sublime and the all too little. There is an intentional *wobbling* in humor: one foot steps out boldly while the other falters or drags—there is an alteration of climbing, lurching, slipping, and recovering. It is for this reason that humor cannot be appreciated fully by the single-minded climber, the possessive organizer of values, and the downright plodder; for them its playful unsteadiness holds no charm.

SATIRE

Satire is seldom found pure: it is usually blended with fun, as in Dickens and Mark Twain, or with wit, as in Anatole France, or with humor, as in Shakespeare. This blending conceals some of its peculiarities. Take away from the portrait of Squeers the fun and the gusto, from *La Pucelle* and *The Revolt of the Angels* the skirmishing of obscene and sacrilegious wit, from the Nurse in *Romeo and Juliet* the sympathetic response of humor: and what remains but the three judgments; what a social menace is an ignorant, bullying schoolmaster! what a sorry thing is superstition! what a capacity there is in woman for talk and fickleness!—and by implication three values: a humane education, clarity of life, and restraint and loyalty? Satire is a taking of sides in a war of values; it is a defence reaction of a peculiarly aggressive type. However fantastic the dress, as in

Gulliver's Travels and in *Erewhon Revisited*, underneath there is a direct interest in actualities—grievances, foibles, vices, malignant growths. The mood and the reaction vary: satire may be playful or caustic or bitter or bland or insolently cool. To use a single marking adjective here is quite as absurd as the attempt to reduce all lyrics to a single mood.

The three chief satiric responses are the personal, the moral, and the philosophical.¹³ Personal satire is born of a grievance and shows the animus of wounded vanity, of sensibility rubbed raw, of a sense of personal harm. Martial, Swift, Heine furnish many examples. A poor dinner or a greedy guest is enough to make Martial write a stinging epigram; neglect dipped Swift's pen in gall; the chafed soul of Butler sent his own father to the hell of satiric portraiture. Satire of this type tends to be malicious, bitter, splenetic; but it may be lightened and softened by clever wit and an enjoyment of one's grievances, as in this epigram of Martial's:

You were constantly a guest at my villa at Tivoli.—Now you buy it.—I have deceived you; I have merely sold you what was already your own.

Moral satire shows the animus of an outraged sense of decency and morality. Entrenching behind commonly accepted values, such as fairness, kindness, honesty, clean living, it makes war upon vice—the dissoluteness of imperial Rome (Juvenal); corrupt political practices (Swift, Daumier, Gogol); hypocrisy (Molière, Fielding, Thackeray); affectation and vanity (Meredith); cruelties and absurdities in war, education, religion (Rabelais, Goya, Dickens, Mark Twain); the chicaneries and corruptions of law (Rabelais in the *Gripe-men-all* and the *Furred Cats* episodes).

¹³ Flaccus, *Samuel Butler* (University of Pennsylvania Public Lectures, 1918-19).

Philosophical satire is more subtle and general. It is a challenge flung at life itself. It is as critical of accepted values as it is of possible abuses. Thus its questioning may be pushed to the cynical extreme of the latter part of *Gulliver's Travels* or of *Troilus and Cressida*; it may be interwoven, as in Voltaire, Anatole France, Samuel Butler, and Bernard Shaw with the ideal of a saner, more truthful, and more brotherly life than is commonly led.

In all three types of satire there is an intentional cheapening in the interest of something seriously valued. It is this sense of something held to be important and championed—the paying off an insult, the defence of social values, the critical inspection of life—that marks off satire from the playful caprice of fun, the indulgent and provisionally constructive laughter of humor, and the light and inconsequential cleverness of wit.

WIT

Wit is purely intellectual in origin and technique. It is unlike the practical joke in that its playfulness is subtle and its malice intellectualized and pointed with cleverness; it lacks the sensitiveness and emotionalism of humor; and it is not like the downright bludgeoning of satire. Wit is rapier play, cool, brilliant, enjoyed for its own sake. Sparkle, ingenuity, aptness, a quick and often startling allusiveness, dramatic quality, and a sort of word-sorcery and word-jugglery by means of which sense and nonsense are changed to their opposites are to be found in wit.

There is about wit something of the deft theatricalism of a *regisseur* who seeks dramatic effects above all else. Many witticisms are, as Bergson suggests, telescoped comic situations. Martial's epigram,

Why, when about to recite, do you wrap your neck in wool?
That wool would be more proper for our ears,

can readily be expanded to a comic scene—a crowd of listeners with wool stuffed in the ears, unconscious of the ranting that is going on. There are, in addition, a quick thrust, a dramatic sketching in a few strokes, and a clever manipulation of words and ideas. Of the latter another epigram of Martial's furnishes a better illustration:

You admire, Vacerra, only the poets of old, and praise only those who are dead. Pardon me, I beseech you, Vacerra, if I think death too high a price to pay for your praise.

Witty word-construction uses many of the devices of the comic: reciprocal interference of series in *alcoholidays*, inversion in *ginthetic sin*, condensation in *famillionaire*, contradiction, and many of the others. When Heine refers to the condescending treatment a poor relative receives at the hands of a baron of the bourse as *famillionaire*, he makes brilliantly apt sense pop out of what seems a mere conglomeration of letters.

Cheapening by means of the employment of a kind of sham logic may be illustrated by the following bit of conversation:

- A. "The law of compensation holds throughout nature. When she makes us weak in one thing she compensates us by making us strong in another."
- B. "So I have noticed. When a man is born with one leg shorter than the other nature compensates him by making the other longer."

B., of course, is talking nonsense. If he does so unwittingly he becomes for us a comic character and draws upon himself our laughter. If he is keen-witted enough to see through the pompous and doubtful pronouncement of A. and pricks the bubble with nonsense persuasively dressed up as sense his remark becomes witty. Any serious interest on his part or ours in bubble-pricking would carry us over into

the realm of satire. If we visualized an individual lurching along, sinking on his shorter left leg, raising himself on the longer leg, if we shared the attempt to get compensation from this tilting and yet saw its absurdity we should be in the field of humor; but if we enjoyed merely the ludicrous spectacle we should be indulging in fun as simple as that of Charlie Chaplin's walk.

COMEDY

Comedy is flanked on one side by farce, on the other by serious drama. Farce is an unblushing invitation to laughter. With an extravagant gesture it sets characters and events in a whirling, jolting motion. People are constantly running into each other or flying off at a tangent; wild things are happening. The only difference between a well- and an ill-constructed farce is this—things are kept going and food is incessantly provided for laughter. Comedy, by way of contrast, does not appeal directly to our diaphragm. To its making go fun, wit, humor, satire as well as what appeals to the serious in our thought, moods, and feelings. The mixture varies: comedies may be light and witty; they may be spun of satire and irony; they may be fantastic, sentimental, whimsical, romantic; again they may be common-sense, bright and somewhat sober-minded. Each of these types requires special aesthetic norms. It is absurd to make the same structural demands of a Barrie comedy that are made of a comedy by Terence, or to look for the same things in comedies so different as *Twelfth Night*, *The Misanthrope*, and *Fannie's First Play*. Still the general aesthetic meaning of comedy may be sketched.

The characters in comedy are of the common, the even too common stuff of life; if they are whimsical or fantastic they are given a common human touch. The situations are the common stuff of life, often, it is true, arranged in curious

patterns. Characters and situations may at times be flung far out toward the farcical, but they are called back within a system of motives and an orderly structure. The interest is complex as well as sustained; it depends quite as much on the stimulation of feeling and thoughtful criticism as it does on the clever interweaving of ludicrous incidents. Comedy takes thought of the lighter side of life. Meredith goes too far when he makes of it a philosophy of ironic comment and of criticism meant to be corrective. While the comic writer is something more than a merry-maker, he is something less than a philosopher. His is a light touch suited to comparatively light matters—conflicts easily solved or comfortably patched up for future snarls, wounds easily healed, trivial incidents, surface emotions. If this, however, were all, comedy could be likened to a magic hoop of gaudy colors rolling and bounding down the street, always inconsequential, hurting or blocking no one in its on and off course and ending in a spin-wheel of laughter. There is always in comedy the implication or the promise of something more serious. Vice and virtue, marriage and divorce, betrayals and disillusionings, misunderstandings, adultery, death—these are matters into which tragedy drives imagination and feeling up to the hilt. Farce turns them into trifles. Comedy, unless it is unusually flippant or serious, takes its position near the line of demarcation, on the side of the *little*, and from time to time glances at or steps over into the realm of the *much*. This *doubleness of reference* it owes to humor.

A man has lost his wife and looks about for another. What tragic meanings here: the blight of death, sorrow, callousness, the collapse of human values! Observe now the working up of this situation into a comic scene in Rabelais, II, 4:—

With these words he did cry like a cow; but on a sudden fell to laughing like a calf, when Pantagruel came into his mind. “Ha! my little son,” said he,—“O how jolly thou art, and how much I

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am bound to my gracious God, that hath been pleased to bestow on me a son so fair, so spriteful, so lively, so smiling, so pleasant and so gentle. Ho, ho, ho, ho, how glad I am! let us drink, ho, and put away melancholy: bring the best; rinse the glasses; lay the cloth; drive out these dogs; blow this fire; light candles; shut that door there; cut this bread in sippets for brewis; send away these poor folks; give them what they ask; hold my gown; I will strip myself into my doublet, en cuerpo, to make the gossips merry, and keep them company."

As he spoke thus, he heard the litanies and the momentos of the priests that carried his wife to be buried; which dashed all his merriment again, and he was suddenly ravished another way, saying, "Lord God, must I again contrist myself? This grieves me; I am no longer young; I grow old; the weather is dangerous; I am sick; I faint away. By the faith of a gentleman, it were better to cry less, and drink more."

"My wife is dead, well, by G—(da jurandi) I shall not raise her again by my crying; she is well; she is in paradise, at least, if she be no higher; she prayeth to God for us; she is happy; she is above the sense of our miseries, nor can our calamities reach her. What though she be dead, must not we also die? The same debt, which she hath paid, hangs over our heads; nature will require it of us, and we must all of us, some day, taste of the same sauce; let her pass then, and the Lord preserve the survivors, for I must now cast about how to get another wife. But I will tell you what to do," said he to the midwives, "Where be they, good folks, (I cannot see you) go to my wife's interment, and I will the while rock my son; for I find myself strangely altered, and in danger of falling sick; but drink one good draught first, you will be the better for it, believe me, upon my honor." They, at his request, went to her burial and funeral obsequies; in the meanwhile poor Gargantua, staying at home and willing to have somewhat in remembrance of her engraven upon her tomb, made this epitaph, in the manner as followeth—

Note the interplay of the ludicrous and the solemn, of the trivial and the deeply moving; observe the sallies into the imaginative and the emotional in Gargantua's love for his

son; in the dignity and depth of some of his religious utterances; in the allusion to our common mortality; in the imagery of midwife, priest, and burial.¹⁴

The phrase "poor Gargantua" is the key to another secret of comedy; the use of sympathetic laughter. There is an echoing sympathy—we are forced to share the exuberance of Gargantua's hilarity and grief,—and there is an interpretative and responsive sympathy. But this response is not allowed to develop fully; Gargantua cries, but he cries "like a cow"; our feelings are dashed as quickly as they are aroused; there is a turn to deeper meanings and then a sheering off. It is the incomplete and somewhat uncritical nature of this sympathy which allows comedy to treat vice as a source of entertainment and to set human folly within the text of a kindly, superficially thoughtful, clever, and stimulating, but fragmentary reading of life.

¹⁴ There is a parallel in the playlet inserted into Chapter xvi of Aldous Huxley's *Antic Hay*. There is ghastly humor in the situation—woman dead in childbirth—and in the switching back and forth between the tubercular cow, Short-i'-the-horn and such phrases as:—"Her milk is cold in her breasts"—"All the woman in her chilled and curdled within her breasts."

MINOR TYPES

There are aesthetic types which have neither the range nor the importance of the beautiful, the characteristic, the sublime, the comic, and the tragic. Theirs is a minor part in what nature and art have to offer in material and form, and in aesthetic appeal. Still, it is a part worth something, for all its lightness and slenderness of emotional and imaginative resources. These minor types: the graceful, the charming, the pretty, the picturesque, the idyllic, and the pathetic repay analyzing.

THE GRACEFUL

Nature offers many examples of the graceful: the swallow, the fawn, the tiger; the pepper tree and the mimosa; the poppy and the columbine. We speak of the graceful lines of a yacht, of the graceful movements and figures in a dance. In art slender columns, arabesques delicately rolling and flowing in their curves, the lyrics of Sappho, the Fauns of Praxiteles, the paintings of Raphael, the landscapes of Corot are marked by grace.

Grace has been defined as beauty in motion. This may be taken as a starting-point. The graceful shares with the beautiful certain qualities: a direct and pure sensuous pleasingness, with no distracting or disturbing admixture; complete harmony of color and lines; an easy self-completeness. But there is something else: movement either present or suggested. In this sense we go beyond the form that confronts us, and through it to a spirit and a life which takes ever new forms, one and all of which reveal that spirit

in its ease, delicacy, and smoothness of transformation. Thus we see the yacht as sailing swiftly and with a quick responsiveness to what the wind requires, the tiger changing the lines of his body with full control of its bulk and strength, the mimosa swaying to the breeze, the dancer creating new patterns, the lyric moving about in a play of images and cadences. Wherever we are confronted with a form in which we sense inertness or lack of easy, quick, and adaptable movement, we withhold the adjective graceful.

The graceful, then, is in part a motor concept. But not all movement lends itself to its purposes. There may be tremendous motor suggestiveness in the description of a storm, as in the cataclysmic passage at the end of *Prometheus Bound*, and the effect may be meant to be sublime. The tense restlessness of Michelangelo and Rodin, the broken lines and sharp irregular motor rhythms of Van Gogh or Kokoschka, and the rough energy of much of Browning's verse are equally remote from the graceful.

If grace is to be had, the movement must be light and delicate, and must show neither abruptness nor lack of control. We are asked to share in and enjoy movement in its lighter, smoother, livingly restful forms and traditions; our motor impulses must not be too deeply stirred nor too widely engaged. Nor must the movement be felt as something cumulative or destructive. To us it must mean the promise of new and pleasing forms. There is about the motor quality of the graceful something of the superficial and the soothing; it skims along the placid surfaces of life, innocent of storms and upheavals.

The appeal it makes to the senses and the imagination reveals a like lightness of touch and of heart. It is sensuously satisfying in the changes it hints at or carries out, but falls short, even here, of the profounder needs and satisfactions of aesthetic experience. To call a work of art graceful is a gesture of social amenity—a gracious rather than a whole-

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souled recognition of worth. Nor does the graceful stir deeply the imagination which it enlists; it is persuasive patterning rather than a bold artistic venture. It lacks the complexity and reach of the characteristic, the imaginative stretch of the sublime, the intensity and emotional vibrancy of the tragic.

THE CHARMING

Slighter and more inconsequential still is the charming. Of all aesthetic types it is the vaguest and has least to do with art. It has come to mean an indefinable attractiveness which while felt to be subtle is not held to be deep.

The term is most commonly used with reference to women; when they are said to be charming it is either in a compensatory way—in default of beauty or dignity—or because they have about them an indescribable attractiveness which holds even while it baffles. In any case, in nature and in art charm bears little relation to beauty. It lacks the rounded and articulated completeness of the beautiful, as it is without its depth. It has little of the motor life of the graceful, and none of its anticipated series of pleasing forms. So strong is its emphasis on the *us* in the attractiveness that it threatens to break through the circle of aesthetic experience. Even when it is applied to art there is this subjective personal note. In a picture or a poem we call charming it is what *attracts us* that counts.

To speak of something as charming, then, is to confess to the personally colored attractiveness—vague, complex, subtle, superficial, elusive—of something slight, pleasingly animated, and not necessarily beautiful.

THE PRETTY

The pretty has less of the subjectively personal than the charming. It may, like the latter, be used sloppily of all

sort of aesthetic responses. But it has a legitimate use as one of the minor types. As such it has none of the elusiveness and vagueness of the charming. When we call a thing pretty we not only claim an impression that is perfectly definite, but we are ready with chapter and verse to justify it. This is true of a pretty face, true also of a pretty china cup. The beautiful arrests and satisfies deeply; the sublime and the tragic move us; there is intriguing curiosity in the picturesque; promise in the charming; rough shouldering in the characteristic. Prettiness is a compliment gladly and lightly given, and forgotten as soon as given. Dainty and little objects call forth the compliment.

The place of the pretty in art is very limited. In gem-cutting, silver-smith work, embroidery, and painting on china or silk it is often met with. Poetry in its relaxed and trifling moments may aim at it. But art stretched to the full stature of its ambition will have none of the pretty.

THE PICTURESQUE

The word picturesque and its German equivalent *malerisch* were much used during the second half of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth. It was applied to landscape, and its use meant that a particular scene was fit to be put on canvas—had the qualities of a picture. But the qualities of much of the landscape painting of that time are not at all those of modern painting. We do not look for rounded pictorial arrangements in nature to be given as a painting, but are willing to paint landscape as fragment; we accept as material her quiet and common as well as her striking and unusual appearances. We take her on her own terms—as uninterested in history and the emotions of man. What we shun is what marks this older painting and helps explain the use of the term picturesque.

Suppose we take, much in the spirit of this type of picture, four subjects: a mountain suggestive of an old fortress in form and in its sheer walls, ridges, and cranellations: a robber castle on a wooded hill; ruins ancient and gloomy, with a black-robed figure meditating on the vanity of human achievement; and a coronation ceremony. The first is a striking natural appearance calling to mind architecture; the second is an impressive conjunction of the historical past, still complete in its form, and of a landscape ever new and ever the same; the third shows the past in ruins, with nature at work on the walls or pushing through the débris, and with man emotionally stirred by this tumbled greatness; the fourth gives an unusual and historically significant event in its exotic trappings and startling displays of color and mass. All four impress us as picturesque; they reveal this minor type as applied to (1) outstanding, uncommon appearances of nature, hinting at human or superhuman workmanship, (2) the conjoined life of the present and the past, (3) an emotional response, historically stirred and regretful, to the ruins of the past, (4) impressive human manifestations which are felt decoratively and historically.

THE IDYLLIC

The idyllic is either a reading of the past in terms of peace and plenty or a selection from the present of materials that satisfy the human longing for, at least, the semblance of contented, peaceful living. In either case there is an idealized interpretation. The Golden Age of a remote past is projected wish-work, but of a quiet relaxed type satisfied with an imaginative return to what is not poignantly regretted in its disappearance. Or there may be a reposeful, sated enjoyment of some sheltered bit of present-day life as it lends itself to such imaginative reshaping as our longing for the peacefully self-complete demands. Lu-

cretius gives idyllic sketches of the Golden Age; Theocritus and Virgil, of the shepherd and farmer; Tennyson of the age of chivalry; and Goethe, in *Hermann und Dorothea*, of the common life of the village.

The manner must correspond to the spirit of the materials chosen: a rounding off, the use of a subdued palette, smoothly flowing verse, polished surfaces in marble, no tense imagery or abrupt intensity of feeling, no vigorous, aggressive technique.

Tennyson's *Idyls of the King* are an example of the idyllic. They portray an age which had its measure of brutality and of sharp dramatic conflicts as well as refinement, mysticism, and quiet and subtle luxuries of sentiment. This age Tennyson reshapes in the way which can satisfy neither the historian nor the dramatically minded. It is quieted down, smoothed over, set to a gentle key even in its jousting and faring, given the spirit of religious peace and good manners, caught up in verse that is smooth and sweetish. To the quiet moments of this life—its idyllic phases—Tennyson has given successful expression.

The idyllic has its place in art. The mood of imaginatively exploiting and enjoying our dreams of a Golden Age—it may be an age of innocence and chivalry or a Lazy Man's Age and a *Schlaraffenland*—with no deep regrets or sharp longings is a recurrent and significant mood in aesthetic experience. So are the poet's vision of a life that is as contented as it is replete and secure, and the soft, insinuating voice he gives to his vision; so is the painter's bucolic response to nature as he catches the very heart of a drowsy afternoon.

THE PATHETIC

The pathetic is often mixed in with the tragic or set in tragedy as an added minor appeal. Cassandra in the *Agamemnon*

memnon is a pathetic as well as a tragic figure; so are Niobe in the Greek legend and King Lear. Ophelia is pathetic rather than tragic. Euripides' *Trojan Women* and Sophocles' *Philoctetes* show a mingling of the two types. It would be easier to understand the pathetic were it more frequently found unmixed, with its resemblances and contrasts to the tragic strongly accented.

One thing the pathetic and tragic share is the emphasis on suffering. The Greek use of *pathos* as tragic incident bears this out, for such incidents as the burning and sacking of Troy, the slaughter of the children of Niobe, the self-blinding of Oedipus, the madness of Hercules were chosen, in part at least, for their possible revelations of human suffering.

Suffering may appeal to us, as it does in tragedy, as the common lot of mankind, as something diffused and unescapable. Or it may hit us as the pain or agony of this or that individual to which we sympathetically respond—we are then within the pathetic. Again suffering may or may not be related to a wider, imaginatively and dramatically interesting psychic life—in this respect also the pathetic is narrower than the tragic. A further difference is this: in the tragic the struggle that results in suffering and the revolt holds our attention and provokes a kinetic response; in the pathetic this note of strength and resistance is absent. Weakness, in fact, often plays a part in the pathetic. The death of a child is more naturally regarded as pathetic than as tragic. The vagaries of language reveal this stress on weakness in a phrase like “a pathetic attempt.” A last difference remains: the pathetic lacks the cosmic overtones which mark the tragic and give it resonance and volume. The pathetic, whether it be gentle or piercing, has about it a quality of thinness which limits its uses in art. The death of a child? what can be made of it? something that stabs or clutches us, with nothing more to be

said—or something as monstrously sentimentalized and falsified as the death of little Dombey—or a tragic happening, with the thinness and slightness surviving the admixture.

There is a grave danger in the indiscriminate use of the pathetic in painting and sculpture—the direct appeal through subject-matter to sympathetic feelings. This is an easier thing to do than to create a design that is worthwhile through modeling, color, and line; and it is a tempting and more dangerous road to travel in the appreciation of art.

The graceful, the charming, the pretty, the picturesque, the idyllic, and the pathetic are a selection from the minor aesthetic types. They represent responses and moods, special and limited, which have their part to play in the varied appreciation of art. They mark also special signs and values in the body of art.

PART FIVE

PHASES AND MOVEMENTS

NATURALISM AND IDEALISM

The terms naturalism and idealism have become part of the stock in trade of aesthetic discussion; they are made to do service in the partitioning of art and in the acceptance or rejection of its creative efforts. Unfortunately they take the color of every prejudice and the murkiness of every bit of confused reasoning. Art is to copy nature, unerringly and uncompromisingly!—but what nature?—Art is not to be a literal transcript; it must idealize!—but how, to what extent, and by what manner of means?

NATURALISM

Naturalistic art there has always been. There are many examples of it in Egyptian and Greek art; and the *Old Market Woman* in the Metropolitan Museum may be set down beside the *Vieille Heaulmière* as a boldly naturalistic piece of sculpture. But as a movement in art naturalism is most definitely associated with the last twenty-five years of the last century, and with certain forces then set in motion and persisting here and there even now.

This movement may best be studied in the novel and the drama. Painting and sculpture were also affected by it, but architecture and music show little of its influence.

The naturalistic drama of the earlier Sudermann and Hauptmann, of Max Halbe, of the Strindberg of *Fraülein Julie*, of Wedekind, and Eugene O'Neill moves away from certain conventions of dramatic technique: the use of glori-

fied, rhythmical speech, fully articulate thought, idealized and rounded off character. The speech is to be the common speech, with its dialects, its crudities, its mixture of diffusiveness and explosiveness; it is to be haltingly and imperfectly expressive, as it is in real life, of thoughts and feelings, confused and fragmentary; men and women are to be of common clay, incomplete and ragged in outline. It seeks the less compact, more confused forms of actual life; picks at the loose ends of situations and motives; and is not afraid to present character in relation to its own chaotic self-consciousness and to larger, imperfectly understood life-processes.

But there is more to the naturalistic drama than a change in the way of shaping and writing plays. Such changes reflect the desire to move drama closer to life—to make it more natural in form and substance. In line with this is the choice of a wider range of material. A portrayal of things just as they are—yes, but of all things as they are. Nothing is to be excluded. Sex in its more brutal aspects and in its aberrations; syphilis, alcoholism, tuberculosis; the sordid, the petty, and the dull; ugly blotches in our economic life; the soiled and the degraded—all this is to be moved within the circle of an honest art which sees things as they are and is not disgusted at their nakedness and foulness.

Such extension of material is seen at its extremest and baldest in the naturalistic novel, of which the chief representative is Zola. There is not a single nauseous smell of Paris or infected sore of its social life; no single bit of peasant sottishness and brutishness; no single repulsive item of the intimate life of the body that does not find its way into the pages of Zola. All this filth is presented, not because to him *naturalia non sunt turpia*, but because he was a lover of truth, even in its unworthiest human documentation—and a moralist with loathings and ideals.

Here are the twin inspirations of much naturalistic writing. This is true of Dreiser as well as of Zola.

Of these two motives the moral one is lacking in naturalistic painting and sculpture. An uncompromising love of truth they show; and an unwillingness to move within the limits of a stereotyped idealizing technique and of such material only as is orderly, pleasing, and inspiring. Nudes as Courbet paints them are much closer to nature than those of Titian or Botticelli. Zorn and some of the moderns have carried naturalism far beyond Courbet. Their nude women are neither decorative creations nor ideal forms; they are flesh and blood with a great deal of their animalism put on the canvas; and with the shorter, less beautiful lines in the transition from loin to hip, as they exist in nature, replacing the long sweeping curve of more decorative or idealistic painting. This may also be seen in Rodin's *Age of Bronze*, which is startlingly like a cast from an actual body.

The motto of naturalistic painting, as of the naturalistic drama and novel, is: Keep close to nature! By nature is meant the world of appearance as it strikes our senses. Record what your senses give you! If you paint an interior, offer a faithful rendering of even the most trivial detail; if you present an interior on the stage, do it with a Belasco-like thoroughness; if you paint landscape, study the difference between morning and afternoon lights and shadows—the effect of light on color—color edges and color patches. Paint what you see, and be sure to see all that can be painted! Put your art at the disposal of appearances, however ignoble, chaotic, fragmentary they may be! Remain passive; do not obtrude your ideals and preferences; and curb the desire to round off and make complete what nature leaves rough and sectional. Leibl paints with extreme care part of a bodice; the naturalistic drama gives a mere loose fragment of life. Simple as this motto sounds it contains many difficulties.

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NATURE IS ITSELF A TERM OF MANY MEANINGS

By it may be meant (1) a whole system of interrelated facts and laws; (2) a whole mass of loosely given, often disorderly appearances, obtruding itself on our senses and presenting itself at this point or that to shifting perceptions and to the brief focussings of attention and thought; (3) values which are independent of individual moods and preferences, and must be taken on their own terms.

Of these three meanings the first is the philosophical and scientific one. One form of it appears in aesthetic theory as the demand that things be given, not as they appear, but as they are. This is realism, which must not be confused with naturalism, although the terms realistic and naturalistic are often used interchangeably.

If nature is interpreted in this first sense art can do very little with it. No art form, unless it be the novel or the drama, can give more than a bit of the Cosmos; and even they are pitifully inadequate and meagre in their giving. In plays like Ibsen's *Ghosts*, Hauptmann's *The Weavers* and *Before Sunrise*, O'Neill's *The Straw*, Brieux' *Damaged Goods*, and Galsworthy's *Justice* there is a scientific approach to problems of hereditary weaknesses, disease, and economic maladjustment, but not one of these plays is even a single page from the great book of science—nor does it mean to be. For no art—and least of all naturalistic art—must sacrifice, for the sake of an abstract synthesis it cannot carry through, its interest in the sensuous in its isolation and sensuousness.

The second meaning has its difficulties also. If we give up the attempt to get behind appearances and to rationalize and unify nature in any final sense; and if we set ourselves the task of offering appearances—a stray incident; a bit of color or form; a mere wash and drift in the life of feeling

and thought—we do not know where to begin and where to stop. Nature in its physical and psychical manifestations has its forms as well as its laws. A tree or a mountain is a unit of appearance; so is a purpose, expressing itself in terms of behavior. Ought these forms to be broken up? Ought we as naturalistic artists to be willing to turn a camera this way and that and to have our art cut into such forms at random? Portrait painting gives a mere fragment, but this fragment has original dominance and is given new unity; the same success could not be had with the painting of a section of the trunk or leaf of a tree or with a foot or a forearm. Yet all these appearances are in a sense natural. Again, if forms are respected, the difficulty remains that there are many equally natural appearances of such forms. Shall we give a near view with many details or a distant one in which detail fades out of the picture? Shall we take our stand to the right or left? It is equally difficult to know where to stop in the carrying of nature over into art. The point may be made by comparing three such dissimilar things as a snowflake, a drop of water, and the mind of Mr. Bloom as presented by Joyce. A snowflake seems to be a mere bit of white fluff; under the microscope it reveals itself as an intricate, orderly design—an artistic microcosm. The drop of water, homogeneous in appearance, shows itself under similar conditions to be the fluid binding agency of all sorts of micro-organisms. Mr. Bloom's mind, subtending simple, commonplace behavior within the space of a day, is broken up in the giving into a chaotic, disjointed thing of snatches. Naturalistic art moves away from the snowflake—away from microcosm and macrocosm—in the direction of Mr. Bloom's mind. But when it has reached that mind and offers its jumbled ideas and emotions in what is often a strained, ungrammatical

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mass of words and phrases, it becomes violently unnatural—and expressionistic. How far then can it go?

Suppose, again, nature be taken in the third sense as a system of independent values to be given impartially. There are what might be called system-values in nature: in the structural and functional adaptations of a tree or an eye, in cyclical insanity, in seasonal changes. But such system-values (1) are dependent on larger contexts of values; (2) cannot be separated in any clean-cut way from our preferences in the choice and circumscription of materials; and (3) are only incompletely expressed in individual objects as they appear. Naturalistic art then in driving home their expressiveness by bringing in the larger context, or clearing away inessentials in the appearance is forced to become idealistic.

NO ABSOLUTELY FAITHFUL IMITATION OF THE NATURAL APPEARANCE OF OBJECTS IS POSSIBLE

In the artistic transcription of nature certain differences are forced. Facts lose something of their palpability, obtrusiveness, and completeness when they are put into a novel, a drama or a poem. Natural color-values cannot be duplicated: not in range—the painter cannot reach nature's intensity; nor in delicacy and fineness of transitions; nor in broadness and massiveness of effect—what is a bit of blue on canvas to the wide sweep of blueness in the sky? A sculptor, however naturalistic he may be in the pose and modeled surfaces of his bodies, works in a medium which differs in color and texture; and he avoids the closer resemblance which the use of colored wax might give. No art can offer the interplay of color, space, and movement given by light filtering through the leaves and branches of a tree in a swaying breeze. No completely naturalistic technique is possible.

SELECTION AND FORM ARE ESSENTIAL TO ART; AND EVEN
RADICALLY NATURALISTIC ART MUST BE SELECTIVE AND
FORM-GIVING

Free verse is an attempt to substitute for the more or less artificial verse-forms of traditional poetry the looser, natural forms of rhythmic speech. But not all common speech is rhythmic even in this widest sense; and free verse with its meandering retracing or stretched lassitude of speech is itself a method of selecting and stressing. This is true also of dramatic speech, when for the sake of greater truth to nature it becomes staccato and semi-articulate, and of the jumbled prose of *Ulysses*, which holds our interest and then wearies it as a distinct and artistic manner, and not as a bit of nature. In painting, some object, fragmentary and trivial, is recreated in terms of a design of color and line; and is thus given a new unity. However formless the naturalistic novel seems to be, it is to be understood and appreciated in terms of the desire to be direct and brutally frank in the handling and the telling; and this desire takes form in a technique of selection and emphasis.

NOT ALL THINGS IN NATURE ARE OF EQUAL
VALUE TO ART

Certain natural materials are artistically more promising than others. This is true sensuously, expressively, and imaginatively. Not every face is of interest to the portrait painter, nor every subject, to the dramatist; they select what yields them their greatest chance. This must not be understood to mean that there is a definitely marked off fund on which the artist and no other may draw, and that everything else is absolutely unsuitable and unavailable for artistic enterprise. It is against this mistaken theory that the naturalist takes stand in arguing that everything, even

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the commonplace, the repulsive, the immoral, is good material for art. But if in seeking to remove this ban he fails to see differences in what might be called investment-value he is in danger of becoming slovenly and uncritical in the selective ventures he must, after all, as an artist make.

THE MOTTO: COPY NATURE! NOT ONLY PUTS UPON ART
AN IMPOSSIBLE TASK BUT ASSUMES FALSELY THAT
IMITATION IS THE SOLE FUNCTION OF ART

No art can be utterly true to nature, no matter how nature is read; and no careful study of art in its origins and creative expressions allows the acceptance of a onesided mimetic theory of its aims.

Naturalistic art in its attempted duplication and faithful copying tends to become superficial; a danger which expressionism escapes, although it is quite as bold in its use of the ugly. Part of the secret of that escape lies in a creative originality which refuses to accept the mimetic formula of art.

Naturalism then must be rejected as an ideal in art. As a movement in art it has its shortcomings and dangers; of these enough has been said. But it has its uses as well. It is valuable as a reaction against too stereotyped an idealism and too narrow a formula of beauty. By drawing attention to neglected materials, insisting on truthful rendering, and moving art closer to life, it for a time rights the balance, only to fall into an extremist error of its own. It sweeps away false ornaments; and when it succeeds in avoiding formlessness or monotony of accent, develops strength and simplicity of technique.

IDEALISM

Some understanding of the swing from idealism to naturalism in modern art may be gained by comparing Thorvald-

sen's sculpture with Rodin's *Age of Bronze*; Hawthorne's *Scarlet Letter* with Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*; Shelley with Whitman; Goethe's *Tasso* with Sudermann's *Ehre*; the *Antigone* with a play like *Desire Under the Elms*; David's *Death of Marat* with much of the work of Daumier and Toulouse Lautrec. Such contrasting pairs show differences not only in the choice of materials but in the manner and aim of working. To discover what these differences are is to get close to the secret of idealism. To feel them in their sharp contrasts is easier than to uncover completely the secrets of a term which is touched and darkened by not a few of the problems of metaphysics.

In a passage in the *Poetics* Aristotle, referring to three painters, states that the first paints men better than they are, the second just as they are, the third worse than they are. In other passages he contrasts poetic and everyday diction; compares the nobler nature of tragedy with the baser one of comedy; criticizes Euripides for his naturalistic character portraits—a naturalism which turns gods and great heroes like Menelaus and Odysseus into spiteful, petty individuals. The famous definition of tragedy and the detailed discussion of the tragic hero alike reveal an idealistic interpretation of art.

Greek tragedy itself must be understood as one of the great idealistic forms of art. In choice of materials, in language, in technique and mode of presentation—the huge open air theatre, the cothurnus, the masks, the choric chants and dances—the purpose of distance is served. Here was something the spectator could not immediately feel himself into in the sense of extending imaginatively the run of common experiences; here was life on a grander scale, ennobled as well as more moving—an exceptional perfection. Something of this same distance is discoverable in the proportions of the Parthenon; in the colossal size and superhuman majesty of the sculptured *Zeus* of Phidias; and—

to judge by later testimony—in the wall paintings of Polygnotus.

Idealism is neither a faithful, photographic rendering of nature nor a violent intentional distortion of its appearances. Put side by side a photographic study of the nude; a black and white reproduction of a painter's idealistic vision of that body; and an expressionist's distorted sketch. The idealistic painter assumes that nature often falls short of beauty, and is not completely self-expressive in her individual creations. And so he smooths curves, follows out tentative lines and rhythms, omits or modifies details that seem to mar and disturb. He attempts even more than this:—he looks for the typical in the particular; he seeks to do for nature what nature only rarely does for herself; he offers the climactic success of a form-giving will, too often balked of its goal. Here, he says, is the body in its perfection and meaning. Individual examples must be modified if nature is to be given at her best. If we except a certain outmoding of technique and convention much of the verse of Shakespeare and the prose of Hawthorne sound strange to modern ears—there is none of that sense of a violation of nature given by expressionistic art. There is reverence back of the idealist's changes. Nature at her best!—We have swung back to Aristotle's term "better." What does this term mean? Morally better? Not necessarily. It is true that much idealistic art moves along a high moral level; and that in its questionable forms it exploits virtue as shamelessly as naturalistic art exploits vice. What it does mean is: grander, nearer perfection, more impressive in its appearances, more massive or purer in its self-expressive form than is to be found in the average. All this applies to vice as well as to virtue—to the baleful light emanating from a Super-Satan as well as to an aureole. Clytemnaestra and Antigone are both idealistic figures; so are Caliban and Ariel.

Idealistic art then seeks to give nature at her self-expressive best. Not at her fullest! for that would mean detail; materiality; and a cluttered plenitude which gives itself too freely, and with too obvious and confused a goodwill for the fastidious taste of the idealist. Much of the detail that goes to the fulness of a perceived object is felt to be adventitious and distracting. If the art is bad there is a vagueness about it: a shimmering cloudiness and indistinctness of description; if the art is good it is marked by the large gathering in of a few expressive qualities—the swift grace of a ship; the thunder and turmoil of war; the commanding presence of a hero; the promise of spring and the mellowness and garnered wealth of autumn. It is in this latter sense that Homer, Sappho, and Keats are idealistic poets. They are all selective in this broad detail-ignoring way; they are all intent on the typically significant. Helen is the beauty of woman in perfection; but a dozen painters could paint a dozen Helens from Homer's portrait. What is true of Helen is true of Sappho's circle of girls; of her swift simple sketching of blossom, fruit, and tree; of her pictures of passion. Keats gives the spirit of the seasons, the drowsy heart of sleep, the quality of Chapman's Homer. All three poets immerse what they select in the golden splendor of language and form—"more golden than all gold" as a phrase of Sappho's runs.

A like remoteness from the material; a like ignoring of detail; a like pushing beyond the average to the exceptional, which instead of being felt as something individual conflicting with the average is held before us as something generically significant; a like simple and lofty decorative touch mark idealistic sculpture and painting. Roman portrait sculpture shows parallel lines: sharply realistic, minutely individualized faces and idealized, deified faces and figures of emperors.

Idealistic art attempts to give the Aristotelian *eidos*, the

"informing form" of things, and in the rendering of this form is simple, restrained, orderly, harmonious in manner. It combines breadth, distinction, severity, and persuasiveness; seldom is it strident, turbulent or formless. What a curiously unnatural calm there is in the lines and the compositional scheme of David's *Marat*! what a spirit of restraint and lofty repose there is in the Greek sepulchral reliefs! The *Niobe* group may be set over against the *Burghers of Calais*; an idealistic Christ on the Cross over against an expressionistic Christ by Grünewald; a Greek ephebos against a bather by Cézanne or an athlete by Stuck; a Greek Venus of the older style against a nude by Renoir or Matisse.

Idealism has a place in art. Its strength lies in its search for perfection and its use of disciplined form. Of these, the first gives it the qualities of height and distinction; the second those of quiet completeness and finality. The sense of finality gained from the statue of *Demeter*, the description of a storm by Homer or by poems of Sappho or Keats springs from the feeling that here are the consummation and consecration of object and artistic means alike—the feeling that nothing more could have been done, and that what has been done reveals utterly both the genius of the artist and the inherent possibilities of perfection of form in the object.

But there are pitfalls in plenty. Idealism may well impoverish art or make it mechanical and lifeless. When materials and forms are made to move within a narrow range of a lofty and quiet beauty, and there is too insistent a preoccupation with the perfect as such and with a generalized rather than an individualized expressiveness, art is the loser, as it tends to become narrow, colorless, and even vapid and insipid; when it moves too far away from the manifold, intense, and imperfect life of nature, it is cut off from many of its possibilities and resources. If certain verse-forms and

words are chosen as being essentially poetic ; if the same ideal heads are used over and over in sculpture ; if language comes to mean nothing but majestic folds, and character nothing but general and imposing types, then art is in danger of becoming stereotyped and mechanized. It is no longer fresh and original ; in moving away from what is living in life it has become academic.

It is as a revolt from such narrowness and mechanization that many of the modern experiments in color, rhythm, and form are to be understood. Expressionism is as truly a turning away from academic idealism as it is a setting aside of naturalism even in its subtler forms.

CLASSICISM AND ROMANTICISM

Classicism and romanticism are terms not to be understood except in relation to definite techniques, ideals, and movements in all the arts. They mark contrasting ascendancies in the work of single artists or schools. Thus Mozart is a classicist in music; Wagner, a romanticist; Racine in tragedy, Thorvaldsen in sculpture, David in painting, Chénier in poetry are classicists; whereas Kleist, Delacroix, Boecklin, Byron, Victor Hugo, Poe, Mérimée and Musset are romanticists. We may speak of the Romantic School in Germany in the first quarter of the nineteenth century—a group of men bound by the same choice of content, the same outlook on life, and by like inspirations and modes of artistic shaping. We may refer to the brief clear-cut appearance of classicism in French painting or of the French Romanticists in the lyric and the novel.

But our concern is not with literary and artistic history and controversy—what is sought is an understanding of classicism and romanticism as opposed interpretative and creative impulses—recurrent, selective, peculiarly marked, and one-sided.

CLASSICISM

Classicism, in the historical sense, is closely bound up with the revival of interest in Greek life and art. It responds sympathetically to what it holds to be their spirit and form. To us, with our fuller knowledge of antiquity, the reading seems incomplete and distorted. Certain true qualities of the Greek spirit were seized upon;—measure and discipline, simplicity and lucidity, formal beauty, calm and complete self-possession; but the life in them was missed. Neglect of other qualities led to a narrow view of Hellenism;

a view for which the romanticism expressed in stories like that of the Argonauts and embedded in the classical beauty of the *Odyssey* or the *Bacchae* did not exist.

This secondary and, in part, mistakenly inspired character of classicism must not be allowed to distract from an appreciative study of the general preferences and ideals which in it find a voice. If it ends in an imitation of Greek art, and can see no other, it is only because it finds there the completion and consecration of what it seeks and responds to.

These ideals are reflected in four representative demands and practices.

THE WORSHIP OF FLAWLESS BEAUTY

Art must be marked by restraint, complete mastery of material, and perfect workmanship. There must be no faltering line, no muddy color, no slovenliness in the execution. Harmony that is easily grasped, regularity, and economy are to be sought. There must be no display of disorderly, undisciplined genius. No materials are acceptable which are too complex or too recalcitrant to fit into a simple, polished, utterly adequate scheme.

This is indeed the spirit and the form of much of Greek art. The statue of *Demeter*, the sepulchral reliefs, the *Victory Tying Her Sandal*, the verse of Sappho, one and all, give with a subdued finality of treatment a calm and splendidly poised spirit. Even when there is another spirit stirring in Greek art—a spirit of mystery and adventure—there is, in the form at least, a simple, translucent beauty.

A COMPLETELY CLARIFIED ART—NO CLOUDINESS—

NO RESIDUE

A semi-articulate life of feelings that cannot be rationalized or clearly expressed is shunned as a clouding admixture; the mysterious is rejected, as possible residue for the imagina-

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tion and for thought; so is the exotic, as residue for a restless and confusing curiosity. The form must be lucid and sharp and self-complete. This means a distrust of four-fifths of life as material for art—and a technique which moves within a very small circle of perfection.

THE IMPERSONAL NOTE

Ancient art when held over against the intensely self-conscious spirit of much of modern art appears naive and all but selfless. It looks out upon the world with an unconcern that is freshening and a little chilling; it is interested in the objects rather than the processes of experience; there is no plunging into the subconscious or the intensely and subjectively personal. No ancient Greek could have written a *Hamlet* or a *Faust*. Classicism seeks this objective, impersonal spirit. Its cameo-like perfection, revealing, it is true, the personal skill of the artist, is the goal of an artistic will aimed at the elaboration of this one bit, inattentive to its relation to anything else and forgetful of personal complications and riddles.

THE CHOICE OF THE TYPICAL, THE GENERIC

What is individual in a complex, detailed sense can never be either fully grasped or adequately portrayed. For this reason classicism works away from it, and concerns itself with simple types and the simple and severely restrained outlining of their broad characteristics. Greek sculpture, if we except its last phase and some of its realistic portrait busts and statues, inclines toward such a generic spirit. It presents again and again, with the same compositional stability, and with slight variations of accent, the ephebos, the athlete, the warrior, the mourner; and gives broadly contrasted types of gods and goddesses. It seems to reduce the variety of figures and faces to a few stylistic models.

Such generalized form is apparent in Greek vase painting, where it is favored by a simple outline-technique. The classicist sculpture of Canova and Thorvaldsen sought to recapture the calm spirit, and the simplified lines and typical forms of this Greek portrayal of the body. In failing to catch the individual life that lies hidden in the simplicity, such sculpture tends to become mechanical and coldly schematic.

Classicism in painting and in poetry all but avoids the suggestion of movement as too individualizing in effect; and shows life arranged in a few simple folds. It seeks the universal in theme and the generic in expression.

ROMANTICISM

Romanticism offers a sharp contrast to classicism on all four points. As a phase of art it appears in many forms and variants; and they are all alike marked by:

AN UNWILLINGNESS TO REDUCE THE ARTISTIC AIM TO A SEARCH FOR FLAWLESS BEAUTY

It would be unjust to assert that Romanticism never attains perfect beauty of form. Some of the poems of Chamisso, Lenau, and Baudelaire are perfect in this sense. There are passages of exquisite balance and rhythm in the prose of Tieck and Heine. There are parts of the huge medieval epics that have great beauty in the telling. But, judged by the strictest standards of classicism, the mixture of prose and verse in a French *cante-fable* or a play like *Twelfth Night* appears a case of imperfect integration—of formlessness. Modern romanticism neither aims at nor often gains the flawless formal beauty so dear to the classicist. It shows itself lavish to the point of wastefulness, restive under discipline, often unclear, too subtle and complex. All this must not be set down to the score of faltering workman-

ship and of an artistic purpose imperfectly grasped. It subtends ideals and aims sharply at variance with those of classicism. Whereas the classicist seeks to mould to perfect beauty the small part of life that can be so moulded; the romanticist, not satisfied with a worship of beauty, seeks to express life as a whole, in its grotesque, mysterious, horrible, humorous, sentimental, problematical forms and meanings. The formlessness of Jean Paul, of Victor Hugo, of Dostoevski follows naturally and inevitably from their view of life and their desire to do artistic justice to its medley of forms and mixture of appeals.

AN ART NOT FREE FROM CLOUDINESS

The complete clarification of art which is the aim of classicism, the romanticist rejects as not to be gained with the materials he chooses and as inconsistent with the artistic effects he wishes to attain. To him art is not a delicate shaping and rounding off of something simple, sensuously satisfying, and self-complete in design; it is a magic mirror which gives, with a cloudiness suffused with light, fragments of the exotic, adventurous, mysterious thing called life. The source of much of the appeal of the exotic, the adventurous, and the mysterious lies in their associational suggestiveness. Over them lies the haze of distance;—a distance which gives wing to the imagination.

THE EXOTIC:—Over against the *Madame Recamier* of David—a classicist painting—may be set the *Fight with a Tiger*, by Delacroix. David has chosen a simple subject and handled it with great economy. The background is neutral, with no intriguing shadows; figure and furniture alike are arranged in long reposeful lines and planes; there is little psychic individuality in the face. Clarity and restraint throughout the composition! Delacroix' theme is exotic:—a distant land; strange animals and plants; alien races with unfamiliar clothing, headgear, and weapons; an

uncompleted, unusual encounter. While David is content with the direct appeal of a few clear-cut lines perfectly related, Delacroix gains imaginative effects by the exotic nature of his subject. He would not be a painter if he did not also appeal through line and color. But even there the effect is as different as could be from that of the other picture: the central mass—horse, rider, and tiger—is broken and jumbled in its lines, striking in its play of colors; the tree to the left merges with the background; there is scarcely a straight reposeful line in the whole turbulent design. Böcklin, Blake, and Burne-Jones, very differently inspired, are all lovers of the exotic.

So is William Morris in his modernized versions of old material. Sea voyages, the Orient, fabled lands and creatures, precious stuffs and stones with magic powers, strange races, accoutrements, and customs form part of the substance of the great romantic tales of the Middle Ages, some of which have found their way into the pages of Boccaccio and Chaucer.

THE ADVENTUROUS: Adventure, physical and spiritual, appeals to the romanticist. It is something whose form, extent, and outcome cannot be predicted. It means yearning, voyaging, risking; and glorying in something that cannot be mastered. It flashes with uncertain lights and darkens with formless shadows.

THE MYSTERIOUS: The romanticist is at heart a mystic, with mystery dear to his heart. Mystery is something elusive, not to be captured and put within the confines of a clear understanding and a simple, transparent art. It attracts the seeker of the infinite. The Holy Grail and the Blue Flower become its symbols. Romanticism seeks and finds it in religion—it was this that attracted some of the German Romanticists to Catholicism—; and glorifies it in loyalty, sacrifice, and love. Loyalty refuses to be measured and limited—Hagen in *The Nibelungenlied* and Faithful

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John are examples of this; self-sacrifice is a mysterious illogical force—witness the tale of *Amis and Amile*; love is not a definitely circumscribed and pointed sex desire, but infinite, irradiating, self-expression and other-valuation.

In Byron's poetry the mystery of spaces and worlds is given voice to; in the romantic tales of Hoffmann and Poe there is a preference for the hidden, supernatural, hallucinatory; for visions and intuitions; for insanity. Baudelaire's poems seek not merely the exotic and the *outré* but the mystery of new sensations and experiences.

THE PERSONAL NOTE

At the very outset a distinction must be made between (1) an intense interest in personality and psychic experiences, and (2) subjectivism—an excessive self-concern and a capricious and biased reading of things in terms of one-self. The first of these applies to all romanticism; the second marks only certain of its developments.

AN INTENSE INTEREST IN PERSONALITY AND PSYCHIC EXPERIENCE: In French lays, in medieval prose tales, in cycles like the *Morte D'Arthur*, and in the great German epics there is little self-consciousness in the telling, but there is an intense interest in personal qualities and experiences. Loyalty, self-sacrifice, love, religious fervor, friendship, delicate personal relations are given not merely for what they exact and mean in terms of action, but for what they mean to individuals, and for what they reveal of the infinite personal life of man.

In modern romanticism there is this same interest, but it exploits the more problematical, the more delicately shaded, the more evanescent and emotionally unstable appearances of personality.

SUBJECTIVISM: Subjectivism is a development in romanticism which has brought it many enemies. It may be seen in Saint-Pierre's and Rousseau's sentimentalizing of

primitive life; in the indecent self-exploitation of Rousseau's *Confessions*; in letters like Musset's; in Byron's romantic reading of history and of the Cosmos; and in the whole unedifying phenomenon of Weltschmerz. It has been given a philosophy by the Schlegels: to them the self with all its longings and caprices has the right, absolute and lordly, to express itself; to see things in its own color and to bend them to its uses. This means, as Hegel saw—himself a romanticist in the larger sense—the endangering of the whole orderly, disciplined cultural achievement of man in science, morality, and art. Small wonder then that the classicist also objects to such self-aggrandizement: to him it means the destruction of form; it puts uncontrolled splenetic hunger in the place of a calm interest in beauty and workmanship.

THE INDIVIDUAL

Classicism was seen to lean toward the generic qualities of simple types. Romanticism is convinced of the tremendous worth and the infinite possibilities of the individual. Rousseau, Byron, and Musset give the medley of their thought, impulses, and emotions as something unique and precious. While David universalizes even his historical portraits and incidents, Delacroix gives the impression of a single encounter or an historical happening that took place once and in a perfectly definite individual way. There are in the novels of Victor Hugo, Dickens, and Dostoevski a host of complex characters individualized not merely in their general traits but in their caprices and irrationalities, their hobbies, manner, and dress. To the classicist such detail is inessential; to the romanticist and the naturalist it is not. If modern romanticism, nevertheless, does not excel in character drawing, if it can show few keenly observed and sharply and consistently drawn characters, it is because it is too subjective in its coloring and too deeply committed to

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what in personality escapes analysis and does not lend itself to clear-cut expression.¹

If classicism and romanticism are interpreted in the broad sense as contrasted preferences, they must be held to have a permanent place in art; for in it are needed:—beauty and a more inclusive expressiveness, form and reach, order and imaginative suggestiveness, clarity and mystery, the simple and the complex, and the pure and the mingled, the impersonal and the personal, the generic and the individual.

As movements or schools, however, they must mean little to an age like ours; an age which is seeking even in its classicist preferences a wider range, a larger pattern of order, a more inclusive beauty, and above all a more intense aliveness; and which is building into expressionism what is best in its romanticist preferences. The classicism of the eighteenth and the romanticism of the nineteenth century are sadly dated. Only an historically sympathetic or a child-like mind can get much aesthetic pleasure from most of their art. At their worst, classicism smells of antiquities and museums, and romanticism, of the exotic perfume shop and the mystification parlor. The critic who values nothing but the tenets, and the artist who values nothing but the technique of classicism are like stately hens carefully guarding china eggs. Nor is much to be gained by adopting the romantic pose. We have become impatient of the self-taster and the sentimentalist. We no longer sit melancholy-wise before picturesque ruins. A new and vigorous life sweeps us on to new standards and forms of art.

¹ In some of its lesser and more questionable work romanticism shows a leaning toward generalized portraiture. An interesting study could be made of romantic book illustration during the third quarter of the last century. There is an ever recurrent ideal picture of girlhood—ringlets, flounces, and ribbons; slight, frail figure, languishing looks; poetic soul. A romantic type devoid of individualizing art! Such types are to be understood as a universalized subjectivity; the emotional readjustments of every generation cause their outmoding—how strange the illustrations in *Great Expectations* seem to us—; whereas the classical heads in sartorial charts have in their very expressionlessness a sort of ghastly impersonal longevity.

EXPRESSIONISM

Expressionism is admittedly nothing new; there are many examples of it in Negro music and sculpture, and in the art of the Middle Ages. It appears as part of the aim and technique of painters like Van Gogh and Hodler. But never before has it been theorized about so much or been in such vigorous ascendancy in all the arts.

A single formula will not compass its meaning; nor can it be discredited by a single impatient gesture on the part of traditionalism. Like a living thing it has many forms and phases; and a right to life.

An approach to its meaning may be had by summarizing a letter which Van Gogh wrote to his brother in 1888. In it the Dutch painter confesses to using color arbitrarily for the sake of gaining greater vigor of expression. In order to make clear his meaning he assumes himself to be painting the portrait of a dear friend. He draws a likeness faithfully; and then takes some of the likeness out of it by a non-representational, exaggerated coloring:—distorting the blondness of the hair to a deep orange or a lemon yellow. To give mystery and intensity of feeling to his picture and to convey what the friend means to him, he sets the head against a background of deep blue. This confession must be supplemented by a glance at some of Van Gogh's paintings. In the group of houses to be seen in the Barnes Foundation Collection form is distorted as well as color—a distortion to be observed in the crazy buckling of the roof lines and in the atmospheric whorls in the upper part of the picture.

What does all this mean? It is evident that whoever looks for either verisimilitude or a regular persuasive beauty

and harmony is wasting his time: such things are not achieved because they were not intended. What then is intended? The distortion, in color and line, is a deliberate moving away from nature; and back of this is the aim at greater vigor, greater intensity, a more violent suggestion of movement and force, and a psychic weighting of the picture with the projected feelings of the painter. Here are all the essentials of expressionism:—a movement which has produced much original and disconcerting art. It seems to outrage all order-loving instincts; and its opponents—photographic naturalists and “uplift” idealists alike—have called it all manner of names: damning it as a degenerate twist of the mind or flaw of the eye; as frivolous, insincere experimentation; as pose; and as the sign of a barbarous lack of discipline. A defender of it like Hermann Bahr sees in it the possibilities of a great rebirth in art; a eulogist like Richard Blunck, in a pamphlet, *Der Impuls des Expressionismus*, which subtends many other similar interpretations, praises it in prose often dithyrambic as a new religion of mysticism and democracy; while Marc the painter, he of the *Blue Horses* and of curvilinear cows and sheep, testifies in his comments on painting to a depth and sincerity of purpose which justify at least in part the fervor of its eulogists.

Modern expressionistic painting goes back to Van Gogh and Cézanne and their turning away from impressionism—that most volatile type of naturalism. The impressionists in their turn had done valuable service in holding that the subject of a painting does not matter, that everything is worth painting; in observing the difference a changing light makes in the appearance of objects; and in developing a subtle and brilliant technique of color and light and shade by means of which striking open air effects could be gained. Manet in some of his figure studies simplifies as much as Cézanne does, but the simplification reflects a belief that detail is not necessary to verisimilitude, and an interest in the

purely visual, flat appearance of natural objects. Monet and Sisley render visual appearance in even its most fleeting aspects by means of a brilliant, shimmering play of color and light in which the structure of objects vanishes. It was against their passively visual and structureless painting that Cézanne rebelled. His work marks the first step in the direction of a new energism in painting; and it is in terms of this energism that the later development of expressionism is to be understood.

EXPRESSIONISM AS ENERGISM

What is the nature and what are the implications and expressions of this new energism? It means (1) intense dynamic self-projection on the part of the artist; (2) a reading of nature in terms of energy; and (3) the creation of new forms, often at variance with the natural appearance of objects—forms which give the active, self-expressive nature of the artist, the essential spirit of nature, and the union of the two.

INTENSE DYNAMIC SELF-PROJECTION ON THE PART OF THE ARTIST

Van Gogh, it has been shown, insists on the right to use color and form arbitrarily for the sake of greater emotional and psychic intensity. A fierce and vigorous spirit, which does not respect things as they are, flames in his pictures. The fruit pieces of Cézanne and the interiors of Chagall; the nudes of Matisse, Pechstein, and Pascin; the heads of Cézanne and Kokoschka; the landscapes of Soutine; the *Eiffel Tower* of Delaunay; the horses of Marc; and the *Tell* of Hodler are one and all distortions. No forehead ever looked like that of Tell, with its central groove and double bulging; no leg muscles ever showed themselves so outrageously unnatural. The truth is that in none of this

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work are accurate representational values aimed at. They are highly individualized projections to be felt in their outgoing energy. It is impossible to confuse a Hodler with a Soutine; the one is all harsh, measured, with little modulation and no confusion; the other has a wild, chaotic strength about him, with twisting rhythms and splashings of red, yellow, and brown. Men differ greatly in their ways of receiving and copying a world of objects; but they differ infinitely more in the active thrust of their personal preferences and impulses. Unless these latter differences are felt and there is some understanding of the will to self-expression as it has its lordly, masterful way with common objects and settles itself into a pictorial scheme, expressionistic painting will seem to us little more than nightmare shapes or caricatures.

A READING OF NATURE IN TERMS OF ENERGY

In painting of the conventional type nature appears as an orderly system of forms, independent and chosen for their visual effectiveness. But there is no binding of all these forms into a common life; no suggestion of a tremendously energetic and experimental nature working in all things. Nor does the structurelessness of impressionistic landscape point that way:—that is merely a visual unification. Expressionism seeks this energy above all else. In Cézanne's hillsides nature seems to be building herself up; to be settling herself in the folds and terraces of the landscape; in his *Bacchanal* a common dynamic rhythm of life dominates clouds, trees, and the struggling nude figures. Forms, to Hodler, are the carriers of a quiet but extremely vigorous life. The radical expressionists go beyond this. They see in nature a form-smashing energy which distorts and annuls; and they hold that the artist has the right to force his way through what is stereotyped and systematized in our or-

dinary intellectual and perceptual responses straight to this energy:—an energy he is to reveal even in its chaotic expressions and upheavals.

THE CREATION OF NEW FORMS, OFTEN AT VARIANCE WITH
THE NATURAL APPEARANCE OF OBJECTS, GIVING THE AC-
TIVE SELF-EXPRESSIVE NATURE OF THE ARTIST, THE
ESSENTIAL SPIRIT OF NATURE, AND THE UNITY
OF THE TWO

It would be a mistake to call expressionists the nihilists of form simply because they do not respect the form of things as they are commonly seen. They may smash the world to bits, but they recreate in their own image in terms of patterns of line, mass, and color which are not chaotic or slovenly. I know of no painter who is more disciplined and consistent in his technique, and a more constructive organizer than is Cézanne. Call it anarchic if you will, to paint apples and oranges angularly, and to tilt plates of fruit at impossible angles; but do not fail to see the economy of the design, the plastic use of color, the simplicity and forcefulness of line, the rhythmic integration. It is true that expressionism, being a highly individualized projection of self and highly personal reading of nature, allows the occasional appearance of painters who seem chaotic and formless. It is difficult to follow Soutine in his tumultuous and imperfect organization. The sketchiness and non-representational character of Kandinsky's musical improvisations in color are perplexing, to say the least. But even such extreme painters ought to be approached in a spirit of willingness to see with their eyes and to work with their creative will.

Much has been written about the mysticism to be found in expressionistic art. The painters themselves, in their letters and comments, have confessed to its presence. Still it

is not discoverable in their work so readily and so fully as it is in expressionistic prose and poetry; the best examples of it are to be found in these other arts, where there is a more favorable medium of expression. What is this mysticism?¹ A double energism has been traced:—in the artist's self as it projects itself and in a nature which is in essence one will, working in and through a multiplicity of forms. The two are now to be thought of as merged; the I and the Other are to be one. The humanitarian, man-centred view of life disappears, and man is read in the larger world context; but nature as an objective system of relations also disappears, and the reading here, too, is in psychic terms. A curious spiritual pantheism results, which stresses at once the most intimately personal impulses and reactions and the communal spiritual oneness of all things. *The Bacchanal* of Cézanne may be used as an instance of "cosmological oneness"; the *Blue Horses* of Marc as an example of the passing beyond single natural forms to a life that is in all and binds them together. There are two paintings, one by Meidner, called *I and the City*, and another by Chagall called *I and the Village*. In each there is a big head at the centre of the picture; in each a scene is given, not

¹ Marc, the painter has confessed to its presence cited from Hausenstein, *Der Körper des Menschen in der Geschichte der Kunst*,

MARC:—"The artistic effect of a study in figure painting has not the slightest concern with the scientific laws of the formation of the body painted; they may, as they show themselves, be followed, but they need not be. In fact it was discovered that the purely artistic effect is stronger when such laws are either not seen or are disregarded. This opposing the natural form is not due to caprice or a craving for originality; rather is it the accompaniment of a deeper will which glows in our generation:—the desire to seek out metaphysical laws—a desire limited heretofore to philosophy.

"To-day we are seeking under the veil of appearance hidden things in nature which we regard as more important than the discoveries of the impressionists—things which they simply passed by. And we are seeking and painting this inner spiritual side of nature not from caprice and the desire to be different, but because it is this side that we see—as at one time violet shadows and the light hovering over things were suddenly seen."

objectively, but as it reaches consciousness in bits and snatches. Familiar objects like sheep, cattle, flowers, streets, and factories appear in sections; and the differences in size are used to indicate the foreground and background of consciousness. All this is as ego-centric and as fantastic as is the romanticism in the stories of Hoffmann. But the technique and the effect are totally different. In his merging of reality and unreality, Hoffmann gives a phantasmagoria of terror, humor, sentiment, and of perception and emotion built on the shifting sands of attention; these paintings, however, retain a vigor, directness, and definiteness in their self-conscious and somewhat intellectualized mysticism, as it cuts into objects and deprives them of their self-completeness, and as it shows them floating in the stream of consciousness.

More striking and convincing illustrations of 1, 2, and 3 may be had from the other arts.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF EXPRESSIONISM

NON-FICTIONAL PROSE

Nietzsche is perhaps the first great expressionistic writer of non-fictional prose. Everywhere he projects and affirms himself—his motor impulses, his preferences, his moods. His vigorous, intense, imaginative, colorful prose voices an energism that sweeps away the orderly thought-structures of academic philosophy; the traditional values of history; and the codes of conventional morality. The Universe, in turn, to him is nothing but energy, casting forms forth and taking them back unto itself in the restless flood and ebb of its life. There are many passages in *Thus Spake Zarathustra* which reveal Nietzsche as a mystic who glories in this oneness of all things, and in the merging of the I and the Other.

SCULPTURE

Modern expressionistic sculpture shows the triple influence of Rodin, of African art, and of medieval work in wood and stone.

Rodin was not untouched by the baroque and the impressionistic. To the latter he owes his fondness for atmospheric effects in sculpture. But he is in much of his work an expressionist. He sacrifices beauty to energy; interprets the material everywhere in terms of the spiritual; distorts in order to get more intense spiritual effects. His reading of man is cosmological; and his world image is one of an endless, varying play of cosmic forces.

Negro sculpture is of more questionable value as an inspiration. The energizing mind of primitive man as it is reflected in idols, fetishes, and masks, grotesque and distorted, is too remote from ours in motives, cosmology, and technique. But we may be encouraged to go back of tradition to a strong original shaping; and become convinced that there can be a significant art with little or no formal beauty. We are carried, also, more directly to design.

In the work of certain medieval sculptors—Grünewald among others—stark ugliness and an extremely simple and forceful design are combined with great spiritual intensity. Modern sculptors like Kolbe, Minne, Epstein, Metzner have sought to make that combination their own. To them the sensuous beauty of the human body and accurately representational modeling are distractions; these are to be cleared away so as to allow some strong impulse or intense psychical experience—lust, anger, grief, sorrow—to express itself fully; and to create an artistic form of the utmost simplicity and strength. In quite another field, that of the wood cut, similar opportunities are offered for such psychic intensity and plain compositional strength.²

² Masereel's wood-cuts are a good example of this.

POETRY

Most of our younger poets have written some expressionistic verse. Much of this verse is violently ego-centric and eccentrically orbited; some of it gives the impression, not of outpouring energy, but of a projected fussiness and restlessness; of lack of creative power in the reshaping of a world hastily pulled apart; and of a lack of understanding of the medium of poetry, and of its limits and possibilities. But poets like Vachel Lindsay and Carl Sandburg yield the sense of great power; and have the gift of putting into loosely patterned verse something of the tremendous energy that works in the formlessness of modern life. The steel mills, the grain fields, the factories and furnaces, the forests, the sunsets are all given a soul; and human life is caught up in their violent or swinging rhythms. A generation back, Walt Whitman voiced a virile self and a spiritual pantheism.

NOVEL AND SHORT STORY

In the short story and the novel expressionism is less frequent in America than on the Continent. Waldo Frank and Sherwood Anderson are our chief exponents of it. It brings with it great changes in style, technique, and content. The style is tense, abrupt, vivid, and often disjointed. It moves in brief energetic rhythms. The technique is one of short chapters, of abrupt transitions, of loose weaving of incidents, of intensification and distortion, of psychic weighting. The manner is sometimes "jazzy." Is not jazz the original expressionistic music? The content is not the painstaking inventory of all things material which characterizes the naturalistic novel nor the carefully selected material of idealism; it is the life, spirit, and movement of the material world as that world is subjectively read by a distorting, changing, and ever interpretative and assimilative con-

sciousness. Here is the secret of the sense of instability and of jerkiness such novels often give. Nothing is allowed to remain immobile and safe in its materiality; everything is forced to take the stamp of motor impulses and mastering moods—to become active and spiritual.

Here are examples of such expressionistic prose:

Waldo Frank *Under the Dome*:—³

Her gray tilted eyes seem sudden to stand upon the farther wall of her husband's shop, and to look upon her.

The street was a ribbon of velvet blackness laid beside the hurting and sharp brightness of the store. The yellow light was hard like grains of sand under the quick of her nails.

In the door and the clang again of the bell, a boy with them.

But the store moved, moved.

There was a black wheel with a gleaming axle—the Sun—that sent light dimming down its spokes as it spun. From the rim of the wheel where it was black, bright dust flung away as it spun. The store was a speck of bright dust. It flung straight. It moved along the velvet path of the street, touching, not merging with its night. It moved, it moved, she sat still in its moving. The store caught up with Meyer. He entered the store. He was there. He was there, scooped up from the path of the street by the store.

THE DRAMA

In the drama expressionism has shown its worth. It has made the naturalistic plays seem trivial, and it has discredited many of the artifices of the idealistic drama. Examples of it are: O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*, *The Great God Brown* and parts of *The Hairy Ape*; the last act of *The World We Live In*, by the Brothers Kapek; Andreyeff's

³ By permission of *The Dial* (The Dial Publishing Company). October, 1920.

Thought and *Thou Shalt Not Kill*; Kaiser's *Gas!* and *From Morn Till Midnight*; Kaufmann and Connelly's *The Beggar on Horseback*; Eulenberg's *Mückentanz*; and the plays by Toller and Werfel.

It is useless to look for a single formula, but certain innovations and peculiarities of technique will be found, in one form or another, within this range of plays:—

MONODRAMA:—Of this *The Emperor Jones* and *From Morn Till Midnight* are good examples. In the traditional drama the hero dominates the scene with his soul-tragedy; but there are other characters into whose inner life we are to feel ourselves; and there are plot and counterplot to be understood in their relations. Here, however, we are set within the will and the emotions of a single person; everything else is merely setting—clue—vision—shadowplay—projection. O'Neill gives merely a masterly study of an atavistic fear and its panicky responses; a study as kinetic and monotonous in its accent as the recurrent throb of the war drums. In the Kaiser play there is the incident of a bank clerk's theft of a large sum of money and his attempt to live himself out in the spending of it;—an incident round which might have been woven a plot, and the tragedy and pathos of the people affected by the theft. But Kaiser does nothing of the sort. He strips of psychic content everything but the hungry and power-intoxicated soul of the thief. Everything else goes and comes in a vague, episodic way. Andreyeff's *Thought* is pure monodrama.

A DRAMA OF TYPES:—The purely individual does not interest the expressionistic dramatist. The stress is on the type. There is nothing new about a pre-occupation with types; it is common in old comedy—proof of this are the type names in the comedies of the Restoration. It appears in his old Morality Plays. But it was frowned upon in tragedy. There is something new in calling a character He, as Andreyeff does, or Spiegelmensch, as Werfel does;

in Kaiser's refusal to individuate the clerk beyond the mere lust for self-expression, and the characters that surround him beyond that of colorless types and projections; in choosing as a title *Mückentanz*, as Eulenberg does, and offering a gnat-like swarm of characters, individualized somewhat in their pettiness, but all alike seeking in their twisting, ineffectual ways an escape from the commonplaceness of their lives.

The most significant and revolutionary point about this new type-tragedy is its turning to types of power that go far beyond the lives, struggles, and happiness-values of individuals—cosmological forces and irruptions, as in *The Emperor Jones* and *Spiegelmensch*; monstrous subhuman forms, as in *Bocksgesang*; great social and industrial complications and upheavals, as in Toller's *Maschinenstürmer* and Kaiser's *Gas!* Individual character drawing all but disappears in the process.

A MERGING OF THE OBJECTIVE AND THE SUBJECTIVE:—Examples are the churchgoers scene in *The Hairy Ape*; the scene in Heaven in *Liliom*; the galley of slaves in *The Emperor Jones*; the dinner and the cyclodrome scenes in *From Morn Till Midnight*; also Rice's *The Adding Machine*, and Lawston's *Ralph Bloomer*, and Lenormand's *Failures*. Everything is shown in objective, tangible form; and yet as reflected and distorted by its life within a perceiving and reacting consciousness. There is something suggestive of dream-technique in this—a dream-technique shown at its fullest and wildest in *Beggar on Horseback*.

LOOSENESS AND INSTABILITY OF CONSTRUCTION:—Scenes are often short and not rounded off; and they are not built up to a terse economical structure.⁴ They begin and end abruptly; and have a random quality about them. There are violent changes answering the flashes and shifts

⁴ Eulenberg's *Mückentanz* offers illustrations of this.

of consciousness. This again calls dreams to mind, but it also suggests the technique of the cinematograph.

AN ENERGISTIC QUALITY:—The cyclodrome scene in *From Morn Till Midnight* may be used to illustrate the energism and the worship of great power which characterize the expressionistic drama. The clerk with the stolen money in his pocket attends a cyclodrome race. The scene is written as monodrama—racers and spectators have no independent interest; we are to see them as he sees them. He sees in the racers nothing but strain and speed and in the spectators nothing but excitement and a lustfully tensed hunger of “sensations.” He flings money about, offers special prizes in order to whip up to the utmost the efforts of the riders and the excitement of the others; and thus gets for himself the taste of power, and a drunken straining and stretching. The royal family enter the cyclodrome; the wild mob turns from shouting to bowing; the clerk leaves in disgust. Force that can be controlled, energy that collapses into good manners, have no appeal for him; they cannot give him what he craves above all else—dynamic self-expression with neither admixture nor restraint.

The energism of this new type of drama is reflected in the choice of materials and in the use of language. Mass movements, as they are revealed in wars, strikes, crowds, and mobs, are a favorite theme; and they are handled with great vigor. Of this the scenes in *Gas!*, the war of the ants in *The World We Live In*, and the last act of *R. U. R.* are good examples.

The language of *Gas!* moves away from dialogue toward self-expression by means of short phrases, which might be called force-units of speech. There is an attempt to make speech more powerful by ungrammatical condensation, by inversion, and a distorted order of words.

MYSTICISM:—Here may be found in its most striking

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form the mysticism which is at the heart of expressionism; a mysticism which breaks through the opposition between humanity and the Cosmos, between the subjective and the objective; and which sinks individualities and separate forms in a stream of consciousness and a self-expressive nature. There are many instances of it in the work of Werfel, Toller, and Kaiser. In Eulenberg's *Mückentanz*, a play written in prose, there are a few lines of poetry that illustrate this mysticism.

Eulenberg, *Mückentanz*,

APPARITION

Boat after boat passes,
 Sending on
 From eternity to eternity
 The living to-day, the dead to-morrow.
 (he scoops in a handful of air)

I have thrown you a wave
 From the ocean of humanity
 —Sea-urchins and shells and foam,
 And animalculae
 Caught in the froth,
 Gone with its going.

You who are standing on the beach,
 Awaiting the sound of the unknown,
 And only too gladly fanned by the uncertain,
 Stoop and observe
 Even as I kneel

(he sinks down)

Before humanity
 The Imperfect,
 The Too Be Pitied,
 And yet Alone Worthy of Worship.

To this might be added the lines spoken by the Voice of Light earlier in the play:—

Voice of Light

Saved is he who when he looks upon creation believes in man
in spite of what men are and what men do!

Other examples of mysticism are Lenormand's *Failures* and O'Neill's *The Great God Brown*.

Such then are some of the peculiarities and innovations of the new expressionistic drama.

What is the value of expressionism as a movement in modern art? Such a question must be asked in view of the energy displayed in the creation of an expressionistic art and the equally energetic protests by conservatives.

Like all transitional movements expressionism has its weak points. It assumes too readily that all expression is valuable; that all distortion has aesthetic and psychic value; and that all contents are acceptable. It tends to overlook the quieter forms of energy; is too neglectful of formal beauty as one of the sources of aesthetic pleasure; and often lacks discipline and measure. But it has great value in (a) giving freshness, vigor, and range to art; (b) helping art beyond a purely imitative, representational ideal and practice; (c) in clearing away the conventional and the stereotyped, and in recovering, as far as may be, a type of artistic innocence; and (d) in rescuing art from a superficial naturalism and a narrow, academic idealism.

Above all, expressionism is a significant and promising development in art because it reflects a force and spirit which whether we like it or not must be admitted to be the force and spirit that stir in modern life; and because that life, unmannerly and undisciplined as it may be in some of its expressions, holds within itself the promise of new hopes and achievements; of new cosmic readings; and of new moral and aesthetic values.

SOME 'ISMS

Certain words ending in *ism* have come to be used with *cliché*-like regularity and thoughtlessness. They appear in (a) the manifestos of radical schools, where they serve as watchwords or rallying points; (b) popular debates on art, where they are incantations or a club to silence an opponent; (c) serious aesthetic discussion, where they conveniently mark certain special movements and phases of art. These movements seem little more than fads and fashions of technique, but there is honest experimentation in most of them—and points of view and aims that ought not to be neglected.

FUTURISM

According to Marinetti's pronunciamento, futurism is a revolt against the worship of form as such, the choice of certain subjects—the nude and others—and a traditional overemphasis on representation. It is a young man's art, setting itself the task of divining and grasping the world as force. Painting is to give the "sensation dynamic." Here are three bits of futurist theory quoted by Cheney in his *Primer of Modern Art*.

How often it happens that upon the cheek of the person with whom we are talking we see the horse that passes far away at the end of the street! Our bodies become parts of the seat upon which we rest and the seat becomes part of us. The omnibus merges in the house that it passes, and the houses mix with the bus and become part of it.

The simultaneousness of states of mind in the work of art: that is the intoxicating aim of our art.

—the dynamic sensation, that is to say, the particular rhythm of each object, its inclination, its movement, or, to put it more exactly, its interior force—every object reveals by its lines how it would resolve itself were it to follow the tendencies of its forces.

Such theories put in practice mean preoccupation with fast moving objects, like Russolo's *Auto* and *Speeding Train*, the search for motor simultaneity of impressions, and the shattering of the form of objects.

As a movement futurism has remained barren of notable achievements; it has produced nothing beyond works of a crude and chaotic energism. The one point of value in its program is its demand that painting, as well as the other arts, be revelational of the power that stirs in the great undertakings and in the mental and industrial turmoil of our age. It errs in (1) forcing the dynamic note in painting beyond the danger point; (2) interpreting power as chaotic and disruptive of disciplined form; (3) of injecting into art something of the immature, brash, and unquiet spirit of the cinema.

CUBISM

Cubism is neither a mere fad nor an adventure in religion. Allowance must be made for a fondness for réclame and startling innovations on the part of artists like Picasso and Picabia. What remains is a movement interesting in its history and of sufficient vitality to have left its mark on the newer, expressionistic painting and sculpture.

The landscapes of Monet, Sisley, and Renoir offer a new technique of evanescent natural effects—the everchanging play of light and color. They are not representational in an exact sense. Renoir's trees are often mere rhythms and

whorls. Monet's *London Bridge* is but the fleeting impression the bridge might under certain atmospheric conditions give to a sensitive eye. Structural articulation does not lie within the purpose of these artists. Formless they are not, but their form is not of the architectural type; colors come to be the soft, intimate, complex organizers of space.

Put alongside of these impressionistic paintings a landscape by Cézanne—a southern village, with vineyards climbing the hillside, terraced and irregularly partitioned by stone walls. There is a distinct feeling for the architectural values of such a landscape. The houses are blocked into planes and their lines are sharply ridged. The impression is one of a reshaping, almost monastic in its severity, of the manifold of sensuous experience. It is this geometrical rebuilding, with its emphasis on form rather than on color or lifelike rendering that gave the impetus to the cubist movement.

The landscapes of Henri Rousseau are simple and solidly built; a picture like Derain's *Cagnes* shows a further advance towards geometrical painting: there is a hint at verisimilitude, but the cluster of houses with their high white walls and dark slanting roofs is rendered in the constructive spirit of a child's set of blocks. This hint at the common objects and aspects of nature becomes fainter in Braque's *Le Viaduc de l'Estaque* and in a landscape by Benes which shows a castle, a church, and some houses sketchily indicated by cubes and prisms, caught within two huge arching trees—trees whose trunks, branches, and leaves are broken into straight lines and geometrical figures. It disappears completely in Braque's *Harbor* and in Gleizes' *Landscape with Trees*. The world of things has vanished: fragmentary bits of it appear here and there in the midst of cones and prisms and color-segments. Picasso's *Violinist*, his *Poet*, Braque's *Girl with a Mandolin*, and Picabia's

Dance are no longer representational: they call to mind the products of the lathe or the caprices of a jig-saw.

This development reveals the more or less unconscious purpose of cubist painters: to annul (1) the object with all its associations, and (2) the sensuous image with all its fleeting inessentials; and to give either their mere structural skeletons or, discarding even that, a new, geometrical synthesis of simple space-forms. But it is one of the paradoxes of cubism that the representational it means to kill reappears in an irritating way in a picture puzzle we try to solve with the verbal tag affixed by the painter as our clue. Again, while the cubist often gains strength by the use of angular lines and the simple and solid building of masses he fails in all but exceptional cases to achieve the unity which he as the passionate seeker of the *logos* of pure space-forms is supposed to seek. In Chagall's *Still Life* every object, from lamp to pitcher and plate of fruit, is set to the same key of a few crude distorted curves; Burger's *Let there be Light* shows an ascending dynamism of line and a pleasing integration of color effects; Marc in his *Tiger* and *Blue Horses* has gained new non-representational unity and vigor of composition. But cubist painting as a whole falls far short of the art of these men, who are to be classed as expressionists; it is chaotic in the sense that there is little linear integration of the geometrical forms into which it splits space.

DADAISM AND FAUVISM

Dadaism and Fauvism have this in common: they both turn away from what is intellectually and culturally prized, and they do it with a gesture of *je m'en fichism*—to borrow one of Huxley's phrases. Dadaism turns to infantilism and Fauvism to primitivism. Dadaist poetry seems a crazy mockery of intelligent speech; stammers, is clumsy with a

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child's tongue, combines a pleasure in the nonsensical with a rebellious flouting of sense. Dadaist painting is sketchy, inarticulate, infantile in its designs and use of color; in its craziest moments it outrages by making a picture of foreign substances pinned to or pasted on the canvas with all the perverse caprice of a child. Fauvism flouts cultural achievements—goes back to the primitive, the wild, and the shocking. It, too, is partly revolt and partly mystification.

These twentieth century products of disillusion and sensationalism need not be taken very seriously. In many of their manifestations they are what is simply and expressively called *bunk*. We are shocked, and suspect a swindle. But now and then a gifted artist can make something even of these.

IMAGISM

Imagists are poets with a peculiar theory of what poetry ought to be. They stated their position in their first annual anthology, *Some Imagist Poets, 1915*, and in the anthology of the following year corrected certain misinterpretations. Amy Lowell, H. D., Richard Aldington, John Gould Fletcher were members of the early group. The use of free verse, with cadences and new rhythms, the return to direct, common speech, the presenting of images, the making of poetry hard and clear were some of the points stressed in their original manifesto:—

To present a picture (hence the term "Imagist"). We are not a school of painters, but we believe that poetry should render particulars exactly and not deal in vague generalities, however magnificent and sonorous. It is for this reason that we oppose the cosmic poet, who seems to us to shirk the real difficulties of his art.

To produce poetry that is hard and clear, never blurred nor indefinite.

The connotations of the term imagist pointed strongly to a *rapprochement* to painting. Certain short Chinese poems have all the distinctness, neat self-completeness, and visual sharpness of a picture—they could be set down on silk or canvas. The imagists at times moved close to this type of poetry. They are sensitive to color and pattern. But very few of their poems, sensuous and visual as they are, could be transferred to painting. Against these connotations they felt it necessary to protest:—

—“Imagism” does not mean merely the presentation of pictures. —He may wish to bring before his reader the constantly shifting and changing lights over a landscape, or the varying attitudes of mind of a person under strong emotion, and his poem must shift and change to present this clearly.

This is the “phantasmagoria” of John Gould Fletcher’s *Goblins and Pagodas*, which are as close to music as they are to painting, and make as free use of auditory and motor, as they do of visual images. What the imagists are seeking is, I suspect, a *realization*. To gain it they use a very free and flexible form. Within this form they have gained sensuous and imaginative effects that are original and fine. They have expressed the desire to put into poetry the new spirit and life they saw stirring in the other arts. It is this desire that serves best for a check on too restricted an interpretation and too cramping a use of their formula.

These, then, are a few of the many 'isms to be found in the arts. They all easily degenerate into fads, but there is not one of them that lacks historical value in the multiform venturing of art; not one of them that has not justified itself, here or there, in what has come out of its experimentation.

PART SIX

GENERAL PROBLEMS



TRADITION AND REVOLT

Every phase of human conduct, from dress to politics or religion, offers the spectacle of a body of practice and opinion establishing itself and maintaining its rule until it either disintegrates under the slow pressure of gradual innovations or is overthrown violently by an act of revolt. The same play of forces and the same drama of conservatism, radicalism, and revolt are discoverable in art. To watch the creative art spirit of mankind as it clears, settles, and builds a home for itself, as it becomes distrustful of its solid comfort, and as it strikes out for new ground and new interests, is well worthwhile. It means a growing understanding of art as a changing, living thing.

TRADITION

THE GENESIS OF TRADITION

At the outset a distinction must be made between traditional content and traditional form; the two are not always found together. H. D.'s poems are modern in manner, classical in much of their inspiration and meaning. Examples of traditional content are: fighting and hunting as the usual, the accepted theme of the early heroic ballad and folk epic; the place of myth and legend in Greek tragedy and in old Italian painting; amatory intrigue in French farce. Examples of traditional form are various technical devices, or accepted ways of doing things: the Egyptian practice of combining a head in profile with a fronting body; choric songs in Greek tragedy; the use of rhyme; the three orders in Greek architecture; the use of refrain in folk songs;

stylization in the patterns of rugs; the use of certain colors in Italian painting. In many cases content and form cannot be separated; this is true of the symbolism in Oriental rugs and of the shapes, methods of weaving, and patterning in Indian baskets.

The social character of early art explains in part the traditional content and the many accepted and practised forms. The epic helped record common martial exploits and develop what was much needed—a warlike spirit; certain forms of music and dancing appeared spontaneously with common religious beliefs and ceremonies, and assisted in making them more firm and impressive; sculpture set itself the task of visualizing in permanent form gods and goddesses or that of recording physical strength and skill as part of some great athletic festival. Tribal symbolism becomes articulate in rugs and pottery, and in the carving and coloring of totem poles. In more advanced stages of society, where a spirit of individualism is already established, fashions and the common conditions and interests of living of special groups easily swing the individual into grooves. Examples are: the comedy of Menander; the cavalier poetry and drama of the Restoration; the songs of the troubadours; the paintings of Boucher and Fragonard and their relation to the *beau ideal* of the French aristocracy at the waning of the eighteenth century. Much of the content and spirit of the ideal of a class and an age is observable in rococo art. The constant and excessive use of curves, the fondness for intricate ornamentation, the over elaborate and meretricious spirit—all this reflected a dominant social taste and a shallow, sophisticated, and highly decorative life.

Traditionalism in forms and technique results from unconscious imitation; from an economic response to what is in demand and finds a ready sale; and from the influence of apprenticeship and schooling. Of these the third is the one of greatest interest. A master's way of gaining effects

was copied by a pupil; and what the pupil could copy was some detail of technique or strikingly individual touch. Thus were taken over and traditionalized: the deep-set eye and sharp frontal bone of heads by Scopas, the athletic figures of Lysippus and the massive ones of Rodin and Maillol, the geometrical simplifications of Cézanne, the decorative sophistication of the Pre-Raphaelites or of Beardsley. In art schools traditionalism makes the teaching easier by giving canons of criticism and offering a fixed and convenient formula for the artistic development of the students.

THE USES OF TRADITION

Whether a particular tradition is sound depends on many things. Some mannerism or defect of vision on the part of the artist or some lack of mastery of his medium may become a tradition among his followers. But what we are interested in here is the functional usefulness of tradition itself. Its uses are three:

TRADITION MAKES FOR A DISCIPLINED ART AND A SUSTAINED TECHNIQUE: To the making of good art go the trained senses, the vivid imaginings, the insight and thought of many men. Something of this can and ought to become a cultural possession. Such were the sense of beauty and the feeling for form among the Periclean Greeks—Phidias could entrust to common workmen many of the details of his architectural and sculptural designs. There is a like traditional and sustained excellence in Greek vases and coins, in French church building, in English furniture and German metal-work of certain periods. The lack of such tradition in American art life means that art instead of being expressive of disciplined taste and conscientious workmanship blooms with the curious and often poisonous blossoms of pure caprice, or in a spirit of eclecticism—of which

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Davies and Manship are examples—borrows from the past.

Excellence in art is in only rare cases the expression of crude, capricious individuality. It is more often the result of discriminating taste, quick response to what the past has to offer in the way of art values, and style, which is consistency and sureness of touch gained through self-discipline. Architecture, of all the arts, reveals most plainly the benefits of traditionalism. There is little experimentalism and there is a wholesome recognition of great achievements of the past—a willingness to have genius move freely within the patterns of good taste.

TRADITIONALISM ASSISTS IN THE SOCIALIZING OF ART:
In so far as early art is commemorative it serves the purpose of social continuity; in so far as it attends or enhances group purposes—harvesting, war, religious festivals, the housing of the gods—it serves that of social solidarity. In more advanced cultural stages the situation is different. Art there appears often as an opportunity and a refuge for the individualist; he can express himself freely with little fear of interference on the part of the group. Quite possibly there are things worthwhile which never can be stated in terms of social value or appreciation—artistic attainments born of the intensest individualism; religious experiences too personal and intimate for any social formula. But these are exceptional cases. The artistic impulse is too deeply rooted in a social life, too widely expressive of a common humanity in range to admit of a purely individualistic interpretation. Again, there are certain art values, not absolute in the old metaphysical sense, but gained and established by social experience, which are a cultural possession not lightly to be thrown aside for the sake of individual caprice. Good manners are a similar possession on a lower plane. What is called good taste was a natural expression of the social life of the Periclean age: it shaped and upheld the work of the humblest craftsman, created a splen-

did tradition in tragedy, and showed itself in what the theatre-goer exacted of poet and actor alike. With us it is partly the form and spirit, partly the content of smaller groups. It is not as a rule sufficiently strong as a tradition or far reaching enough to stamp our art with what might be called a social excellence. Some socializing of art there is, but in default of an artistic tradition it is of a moral or political type, and does much harm to art. How much better to seek for something social and permanent in art itself, and to provide for individual genius a helpful discipline and an orientation in terms of what the past has yielded of a developing taste and a progressive mastery of art materials and methods!

TRADITION ASSISTS IN THE STABILIZING OF ART: In certain long established, conservative firms or banking houses and in certain noble families a traditional pride of standards and breeding¹ makes for solidarity and balance, and guards against lapses by the individual to lower standards than those of the group. There is a similar force at work in art. The erratic appearance and unstable nature of artistic genius are commonplace of observation. So is also, however, the fact that there is a stabilizing influence in cooperative effort and well established models and methods—as among Greek vase-painters and stone-cutters and medieval builders or silversmiths—in a sustaining and informing good taste; and in the recognition of craftsmanship and beauty in their relation to the past, and to the willingness to submit to its discipline and to move along the level of its achievement.

¹ In a modern German comedy (Sternheim, *Der Snob*) a nobleman is asked the hand of his daughter by a man who has not only gained millions by business enterprise but has in a surprisingly short time acquired the urbanity and sureness of manners that go with noble birth. The nobleman looks upon him with the deepest distrust—no weakness is apparent, but it must be there, he argues, for if it is not, what is to become of his pride of race if good breeding, which to him is the product of many generations of discipline, can be gained within a single lifetime.

REVOLT

THE GENESIS OF REVOLT

The will to non-conformity plays a small part in early social life. Economic welfare calls for collective action; unconscious imitation and social discipline favor conformity; and there are few sharply individual problems of living. With a rising tide of individualism comes the demand for free expression, the desire for the new, and a rebellious attitude toward what is old and insisted on by the group. The desire to set oneself apart from others and to express oneself freely is a natural and useful social development. So are a craving for novelty and a turning against the dictatorial and the mechanizing. If society is a living thing we must expect a sign of this, its life, in an inherent instability—a sloughing off and renewal of tissue, and either gradual or violent readjustments.

This is the genesis of revolt in art also. But there are many special problems. It matters little what non-conformist movement we are considering—Fielding's departure in the novel, the naturalistic drama in Germany and the naturalistic novel of the de Goncourts and Zola, impressionism and expressionism in painting, Wagner's music drama and Rodin's sculpture, imagism and free verse, secessionistic exhibitions, *art nouveau*—everywhere there is the same dissatisfaction with old materials and methods and mechanized aims, and an insistence on the right to see for oneself and to give form to that vision, no matter how sharp the clash with accepted standards. This is true always of the leaders of a radical movement in art. Their following is a mixed one, made up as it is of true disciples who seek to spread the new message, uncritical enthusiasts and iconoclasts, novelty-seekers, self-advertisers, and faddists who

turn revolt into a cult of mannerisms and bad taste, and swing it back to mechanization.

THE USES OF REVOLT

REVOLT TENDS TO KEEP ART FROM BECOMING STEREOTYPED, MECHANICAL: Art over a long period shows clearly the waxing and waning of creative force, and the appearance and dissipating of fresh and original responses to the world. In ages when the great creative forces in art lie exhausted or quiescent after an outburst and a glorious bearing, a substitute is offered and accepted. The forms which the masters had hewn for themselves in inspired madness, often in conflict with the good taste of their times—for taste can kill art—become the desiccated formulas which sustain the mediocre, and satisfy an artist and a public who get their aesthetic impressions at second hand and never test them for the life that is not in them. The result is mechanization. Certain subjects become stock-in-trade; tradition, the parrot-talk of art schools; words and phrases are given a poetic gilding and are carried from one poem over into another; verse-forms and sculptural and pictorial conventions give a sameness and a mechanical quality to art which are worse than the worst alexandrine-chopping or the worst pseudo-classical drama.

At such a time revolt is like a life-giving wind. It clears away and fructifies. A new spirit arises and brings with it a critical attitude toward formulas. The desire to see for oneself is paralleled by the effort to make each work of art mean something by and for itself.

REVOLT TAPS NEW RESOURCES FOR ART: There is danger to art in the belief that everything worth doing has been done and that there are no promising departures possible either in subject-matter or technique. To counteract this a new rebellious, experimental spirit is needed—a spirit not

content to borrow its subjects from the past and to learn by rote a technique that stands in no living relation to the present or the future. Meunier, Pennell, Sandburg, and others have done artistic justice to an industrial age which Ruskin saw approaching and could not understand; architecture has gone new ways; modern music has smashed through classical formulas; the drama and the novel have aimed at and gained new effects.

The experimentalist must risk wasting our time and his—the very nature of his work brings that with it; he should not, however, increase the risk by seeking novelty at all costs. The old is not to be condemned simply because it is old, and the new is not its own justification. There is in all radical art movements a wide margin of the worthless. Responsible for it are vanity, a childish fractiousness, and a lack of disciplined effort and aim. But the experimentalism is justified if it occasionally results in something new that is genuinely worthwhile, and if it gives new life and range to what is one of man's oldest and most distinctive achievements.

REVOLT ALLOWS THE EMERGENCE OF A SHARPLY PERSONAL ART: Both social and personal motifs are present in the creation and maintenance of art. Whenever art is traditional in its meanings and methods the social overbalances the personal. Revolt has the useful part of righting the balance. In its origins it reflects the individual's unwillingness to accept uncritically what is socially current and accredited. It is a personal, creative eruption. Great rebels—Wagner, Rodin, Walt Whitman, Nietzsche, Bernard Shaw, Van Gogh, Cézanne—refuse to compromise: they put into their art whatever of creative pressure, force of conviction, sincerity of purpose, and original technique their personalities can command. Theirs is not the fault if little minds ape their ways and reduce them to a rigmarole, or if rebels flaunt selves which are not worth expressing. The right to revolt is a dangerous one, but in spite of its

frequent misuses it is a right that ought to be exercised in the interests of a strongly personal art.

The story, then, of art is one of tradition and revolt: of the interplay of discipline and creative freedom; of the steadying processes of elaboration and social mastery, broken into and saved from a deadly mechanization by the force of individual artists who are not afraid of new paths of aim and technique, and who save themselves from caprice by the weight, bulk, and masterfulness of their artistic genius.

THE RELATION OF ART TO LIFE

If much is to be made of this problem its terms must be understood. By life is here meant: (1) purposive activities on the part of man—instincts, habits, preferences, value-settings; (2) the general process of adjustment and modification by means of which individual and race maintain themselves; (3) the world-process—as read by man—in its changes and their laws, its ups and downs of health and decay, and its rhythmic ebb and tide.

Among the many purposive activities of man there are certain ones roughly grouped as aesthetic and held to find their full expression in art. Art is seen to range from the intensely personal creativeness shown in a lyric or a symphony to communal, cooperative or socially inspired creative work; such as building churches, embellishing cities; taking part in tribal dances and chants, or giving touches of beauty and artistic value to dress, gear, and furniture.

The problem is to discover: (1) the relations, friendly or hostile, that exist between aesthetic interests and the other great human interests; (2) how art is to be viewed biologically, in terms of general human adjustments; (3) to what extent an aesthetic reading can be given to the world-process, or Cosmos.

AESTHETIC AND NON-AESTHETIC INTERESTS

The chief non-aesthetic activities whose self-expression affects art in one way or another and whose claims are to be weighed are: practical interests, science, morality, and religion.

Certain of the relations between aesthetic and practical activities were traced in the chapters on *The Origins of Art*, *The Dance*, and *The Aesthetic Response*. There it was shown how through a process of indirection the interest shifts from the definitely useful thing to free, self-expressive satisfactions to be had in its making; and from the large relational readings of both practical life and science to a contemplative, isolating, and circumscribed concern with what is being or has been artistically created. The contemplative attitude is not to be understood as utterly passive—a sort of day-dreaming—. The motor quality is present in the shaping which yields artistic form, and present also in the shaper's empathetic and sympathetic response to his work. But all these motor activities move, as they do not in practical life, within the circle of a world of semblance; a circle which reveals a strong centrifugal force drawing art away from the practical world and from the consciousness of self in its ordinary relations of purpose and of pleasure. The aesthetic response was interpreted as a process of impoverishing and enriching:—a flattening of the thing to the shape, or image; and a passing from the image to an organized form, which means a form enriched by inner relationships of line, color, sound, rhythm, and pattern; and enriched also by the rendering of a self-expressive life which we feel to be our own at the very moment it stands over against us and invites us to an excursional understanding of its nature and complexities.

There is, however, another and more sharply pointed problem. What ought the relation to be between art and the other great human interests? There would be no question of adjusting rival claims if we had unlimited resources of energy, time, and money, and could express ourselves fully and without confusion in all five fields of values. Unfortunately, the resources are limited, so we are forced to

consider whether their claims can be adjusted; on what terms there can be granted to each a free expressive life of its own; and how, in particular, art can be saved from a confused mixing of standards, and an intolerance which seeks to subject it to the alien control of utility, morality, and religion.

Nothing is gained by matching intolerances and insisting that art exists for art's sake, and is, therefore, not to be set within any larger scheme of values. There is something ingenuous and childlike about the belief that art can thus hold itself apart from a social life which has developed and must nourish it. In material and aim alike art is culturally conditioned and inspired. The individual artist who has sufficient strength of purpose to keep clear of the trivial and the merely precious and to gain a worthwhile vision, at variance with the commonly accepted, has the right to hold himself apart and to experiment. But even such art must be seen in cultural perspective. Nothing could be more strikingly individual than the work of Cézanne, Renoir, Pascin, Soutine, Rousseau, and Kisling, to be seen in the collection of the Barnes Foundation. Each has his own vision and his distinctive pictorial values. But looked at in the large their painting has its place within the traditions and revolts of nineteenth century art; is paralleled by similar experiments in poetry and music; and swings in line with spiritual impulses, tensions, and readjustments in the wider life of morality and religion.

The relations between science and art present no special difficulties or controversies. Science moves away from the picture thought of its slight beginnings to abstract terms, patient research work, relational thinking, and purely intellectual scaffolding. In its observations and experiments it comes close to the sense object—the color, form, and texture of a leaf or flower—; but its ultimate interest is in a relational scheme into which that object may be brought. In

the scientist's use of hypothesis and generalization there is something of the creative imagination and intuitive vision of the artist; and his larger structures especially may show aesthetic virtues such as economy, harmony, articulated wealth of detail, and elegance. The artist, in his turn, has much to gain from a responsiveness to science:—a responsiveness which allows him to make the scientific work of his age his own, and to find in its reshaped views of man and his world new problems and a new range of effects. He must, however, guard against too abstract and too complete a rationalizing; nor must he move too far away from the interest in the sensuous as such, without which there can be no art. His drama must not be merely a proposition worked to a triumphant Q. E. D.; his novel, not merely a *roman à thèse*; and he must remain within the circle of semblance which science is constantly breaking through and discrediting. In this sense the aims and the technique of science and art are so dissimilar that if mankind were utterly and consistently scientific there would be no place for art, while there would still be a sort of general aesthetic self-expressiveness in the life and procedure of science. But the very nature of this difference and the sharply specialized interests of both scientist and artist make actual confusion and bigoted interference, on one side or the other, a remote and infrequent chance.

The relations between morality and religion and art are more complex and controversial. Throughout its history art has drawn for some of its material on the moral and religious experience of mankind; its task has often been the consecration of moral ideals, forms of worship, imaged deities, and aspirational needs. From such tasks it need not suffer an aesthetic loss. Some of the finest music is church music; much of the best architecture and sculpture is religious in origin and motive; the ideal moral content of

the drama of Aeschylus and Sophocles is perfectly blended with splendor of language and artistic portrayal of character. If there is no such perfect blending in Dante and Milton, it is because there is too much theology in their religion. Art then need not suffer; and morality and religion may be the gainers. By a sympathetic response to art and a well considered use of its glorying in the sensuous, morality may become a little less narrow and unlovely, and religion a little less abstract and aloof.

There is, however, a difference, far reaching and leading to clashes. Art moves within a world of semblance; within that world it develops an artistic conscience selective of sound, colors, word images; and creatively organizing. It draws within that circle such of the materials of life as it can use. At this point there is an inherent antagonism between it and morality and religion. No moralist would be satisfied with a morality that was merely appearance and did not work its way into actual moral problems; no religionist would be content with a divinity that was not the cause of things, a real shaping influence in character, the incentive to a certain way of living, and the guarantor of a moral order.

Again, the principle of selection is different. There is no denying that Aeschylus had a deeply religious mind, and that to him Greek mythology was intensely real. In his case selection and reinterpretation are not at variance with the interests of morality and religion: his Zeus moves on a higher moral plane and is a worthier object of worship than the earlier Zeus. But he is also a Zeus of infinitely greater imaginative appeal; and it is there that the real secret and value to art of the selection lies. Raphael chose religious subjects, but the aesthetic meaning of his painting is in delicacy of line and persuasive color harmonies. When Rodin contends that every great artist is religious he is merely referring to what the Germans call *Weltgeföhle*,

cosmic emotions and imaginings, through which a work of art is given reach, intensity, and volume for the imagination. His own world image, in terms of cosmic stress and urgency, reflects nothing but the condition on which he can satisfy his sculptural genius; it has no other meaning for him but that; and is in no sense put forward as an only true, universal religion.

Morality and religion do not employ such a principle of selection. Interested as they are in the reality of the good and the divine, they are forced into an intolerance of evil. They are restrictive, disciplinary, and distrustful of the body and its impulses. Only if it could be shown that moral evils were less capable of being put into organized form and were of smaller imaginative value than the good, could a conflict between art and morality and religion be avoided. But that cannot be done. Rabelais in his farce; Congreve in comedy; Matisse in painting; Jeffers in his poetry; Strindberg, Wedekind, and Werfel in their tragedies give the gross, the misshapen, the morally questionable, and redeem it by nothing but lavish genius, brilliant organization, wit, and imaginative power. In Werfel's *Bocks-gesang* there is a scene which must be unendurable to the moralist and the religionist. It is damnable in its perversion of values—of ceremonies and ideals. Release the Beast! Worship the Beast in Man! is the cry that rolls with religious fervor across the stage. This scene, soul-shaking in its starkness, is one of the most powerful and compelling scenes in all modern drama.

How are morality and religion to defend themselves when art, going its own way, sets itself at variance with their established values? Censorship is the weapon they employ. Censorship is an attempt to become morally selective of the types of art to be encouraged and those to be suppressed. Its past attempts to control art in the interests of morality have shown much to its discredit; its record is one of al-

most incredible stupidity and intolerance. But even that record does not allow us to throw aside censorship without further thought. Each of the great human interests has a legitimate and necessary place in a complete life; each is entitled to strike blows in its own defence. When art in its concrete effects becomes demoralizing and dangerous to the common good, a society intent on welfare has the right to seek its suppression. But—and this is where the real difficulty and danger of censorship lie—(1) it must not allow itself the confusion of holding that all immoral and socially destructive art is therefore artistically bad; (2) it must not assume too readily that man has not the right to make himself imaginatively at home within the immoral; (3) it must be critical of its moral and religious formulas; not too ready with a moral extinguisher for every little flame that does not burn to its liking; and broadminded enough to allow a full, assertive life to all large human interests.

There is not much to choose between the carping moralist, the religious fanatic, and the petty aesthete. Each is a special pleader, unfairly pushing his own claims and wrecking a broad and balanced life in the process. They are alike too bigoted to see the need of having all five interests creatively active and mutually responsive in a life which cannot be without conflicts—practical life, science, morality, religion, and art being differently conditioned and aimed, but which can and ought to be lived in a large and tolerant spirit.

THE BIOLOGICAL FUNCTION OF ART

Human life maintains itself by a series of adjustments of a twofold nature:—*accommodation*, in the sense of making the most of actual conditions that confront the individual and the group; and *modification*, in the sense of an

instinctive or rationalized selecting and manipulating by means of which what happens to man is swung in line with the needs of a strong, self-expressive, satisfactory life. Successful adjustment of this kind may be called life-efficiency, to mark it off from the narrower efficiency in the performance of narrow practical tasks.

It is natural to be curious about the place art has in such a general adjustment. Art is one of the oldest activities of man; it is constantly created and persistently enjoyed; it costs effort and brings returns; it appears at all cultural levels, the highest as well as the lowest; and it seems to be bound up in many ways with the existence, the welfare, and the meaning of social life.

Art in early group life—and to a lesser degree in modern life—is in close dependence on certain social tasks. War songs, rowing refrains, mimetic dances have their tribal uses; so have the ballad, commemorative and ceremonial painting, the prayer rug, the carved totem pole, the fetish, and the shrine. The uses and forms of art differ in different localities. Such ethnological variations are not our present concern; our question is a general biological one. War, love, food, collective ways of feeling and acting, magic, an instinctive search for health and vigor—one and all are the great forces and influences of early life. They set problems and offer solutions in the business of self-preservation. Art, in reflecting and serving them, serves life-efficiency as well. Thus war dances develop and give direction and efficiency to a war spirit; gymnastic dances supply physical training; songs facilitate the work of the group; tribal symbols, ceremonies, and places of worship give point and concreteness to a common life; love charms and tokens have their uses; the magic of amulets and the bid for rain or food by means of incantations, childlike and ineffective as they are, reflect ideas of economic ill-faring and well-faring, and an economically inspired art.

All this is fairly obvious and offers no difficulties. The crux of the problem appears when we inquire into the general biological usefulness of (1) certain aesthetic activities and preferences which go beyond social uses and are often not expressed in and through what is called art; and (2) art as an independent interest and structure.

(1') It has been shown that there is an interest in what might be called artistic shaping and ornamentation when there is no practical need of such things. Symmetry is sought in a paddle or a drinking cup, and form in a dance, for their own sakes. An aesthetic surplus, it seems! Much of this apparent surplus is beyond the field of art. What is called form in tennis—a compound of smoothness, grace, and elegance in the stroking—is not a necessary condition of efficiency; it often has the appearance of a luxury practised and enjoyed as such. This is true also of an elegantly solved chess problem and of a decoratively phrased gesture or carriage of the body.

(2') Again, art has achieved a mode of independence, with a domain, problems, and values of its own. It is often practised in an intensely individual way; it is neglectful of the useful, and voluntarily assumes great life efficiency hazards. Loyalty to their vision counts for more with artists than does making a living. Thus Soutine smeared his paint on thickly when he had every economic motive for using it sparingly.

With regard to (1) it may be said that an artistic interest in processes and a surplus of creative effort and enjoyment over and above the utility value of objects are not so much of a luxury as they appear to be. Not only do they make work less irksome but they assist in the cultural development of man by helping create a world which bears the stamp of his spirit, and which allows him free and pleasurable self-expression even when purposes are pointed and practical demands are insistent. Again, "form" in non-aesthetic ac-

tivities at times, at least, means the easy coordination and mastery of effort which tend to make efficient performance the rule rather than the exception. But even when it has no such usefulness, it is far from being unjustified. There is no reason to believe that a life lived lavishly and decoratively is not the best life for man. Human nature craves a certain amount of leisurely and even wasteful living, of disengaged responses, of variety and fulness of satisfaction; and, from the teleological point of view at least, the process of life itself is loose, leisurely, wasteful,—giving in its formlessness opportunities both to the practical technician who seeks to harness and master it, and to him who merely looks for artistic “form” in the living.

With regard to (2) it must be said that art, in its independent and self-sufficient creations and enjoyments, has a biological part to play. Its uses are the following:—it (a) gives nobility and distinction to man’s leisure; (b) affords an escape from pre-occupation with self and from the oppressiveness of what is in a sheer sense material; (c) allows man to become self-expressive in measured patterns, and thus offers an attractive combination of spontaneity and discipline; (d) permits the senses to express themselves without grossness, and reason to function both broadly and concretely; (e) offers a release from tension; (f) is an enjoyable compound of the contemplative and the motor; (g) gives concreteness and variety to man’s search for the perfect; (h) supplies a highly specialized, broadly significant type of satisfaction, without which life would tend to become drab, and pleasure would incline toward the gross, trivial, and meretricious.

To attempt to reduce these uses to a single formula would be a dangerous game, which I am content to leave to any one who is so obsessed with the idea of unity that his teleology becomes a theology of the monotheistic type.

THE UNIVERSE A WORK OF ART?

Is there a will to beauty and artistic effectiveness in nature? Many of the details of nature suggest such a formative will. There is a great beauty of form and color in flowers; grandeur in a mountain range; intricacy and a pleasing variety of design in snow-crystals; a delicate blending of texture, color, and a pattern in a snake's skin. Art turns to this artistry of nature for many of its motifs.

But there remains the larger question whether the universe, not as detail but as system, is to be viewed as a single, self-complete, artistic achievement—a work of art.

Analogies may be drawn from morality and religion. Creative attempts have been made to interpret the cosmos as a moral order and as a system of divine purposes. God looked upon His work and saw that it was good. He had given the setting for the great drama of human destiny. Back of such moral and religious readings is the desire for guidance and justification; and they reflect an aspiring faith. But did God look upon His work and see it to be beautiful? Did He completely express Himself as an artist? The question seems a little strange: the practical motive for such an aesthetic unification of the world and the faith are lacking. If the attempt is made nevertheless, it will prove unsuccessful. Nature is on too vast a scale, and too intricate and disorderly in its ensemble to allow us to confront it as we might a painting or a piece of sculpture, in a discriminating and appreciative understanding of an artistic purpose unfalteringly worked out and complete. Such attempts usually end in either a vague, unsatisfying aesthetic mysticism or a religion of cosmic beauty, in dire need of all the faith that any religion can summon and build on.

It is a significant fact that when art becomes cosmic in its motives and ideals—as it often does in tragedy—it gains

less from envisaging the universe as a transparent and harmonious system than from responding to it as something huge, fragmentary, semi-articulate, and questionable—something that rouses the imagination and perplexes the mind of man.

Such then are three of the most general problems of aesthetics. They have their appeal and their worth as problems. But they must not be allowed to draw us away from the concrete facts of art and its appreciation, and from the questions that spread fanlike from these facts. For it is here that a system of aesthetics must show its life and spirit: a life flexible and responsive, and a spirit—sympathetic, careful, keen, and open-eyed—as distrustful of a formula that is too sweeping as it is eager to correlate and to weave tentative intellectual patterns.

THE END

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

ORIGINAL SKETCHES

by

PAUL KRUMMEICH

The following original sketches illustrate the process of subconscious elaboration and change. They throw further light on how a mood emerges from our subconsciousness; and on how and in response to what forces and laws it develops and seeks expression.

I have used my own sketches only because I have first-hand knowledge of how they came about.

SKETCH I.
12-27-'25

Andante Maestoso M. M. ♩=72.

mf

"Choral-motif"

8va

Sketch I represents a natural rebound from an overwhelming depression accumulated during a prolonged study of J. S. Bach's *Choraleprelude*, "Now come the Gentiles' Saviour." Bach's composition is in the minor mode of G and expresses an austere and gloomy mood; Sketch I, also, represents a typical choral-motif, but in the major mode of G, and thus radiates an infinitely brighter atmosphere.

In my opinion, Sketch I embodies the overflow of a mood, more or less the opposite of the one expressed in Bach's composition. My sensation while playing Sketch I was one of intense relief; I felt that a temporarily disturbed psychic equilibrium had been reestablished.

Adagio religioso M. M. ♩ = 52.

SKETCH II.

6-25-'25

"a"

p

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

The melody of Sketch II represents a tonal realization of the undulating line a, visualized as a temporal line (a graceful gesture), while the organ point on D flat (in the bass) stands for the straight line b, similarly visualized. In this case, Sketch II is a kind of program music, whereas it would be pure music, if it had aroused a phantasy picture of the lines a and b. The reader will remember that the composer's phantasy is of the audile type; whatever he expresses must first be visualized as ideal sound, and we may say that he composes "sound-images." While in painting and sculpture all lines and curves are fixed in space, in music everything is actual motion. Music is a temporal medium of expression, and we speak of melodies as temporal lines or curves.

Andante con moto M. M. ♩ = 72.

SKETCH III.

1923

Molto cantabile

p

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. * Ped. * Ped. etc.

(The second half of Sketch III is added by reflection and is, in my opinion, inferior to the first half, which is spontaneous.)

Sketch III is an old friend; it is the spontaneous expression of a mood with which I am on very familiar terms; in fact, this particular mood has haunted me for many years. I have always felt that a certain composition had deeply impressed me, but I could not recall this particular melody, although the mood which it had aroused long ago constantly returned demanding and finding spontaneous expression time and again in varied forms.

I have repeatedly caught myself employing these variations of one and the same melody for the purpose of demonstrating certain types of moods. They are represented by Sketches IV, V, VI, VII, VIII, and IX. If the reader will play Sketches III, IV, V, and VI, he will notice how the serene mood, expressed in Sketch III, gradually assumes a lighter color until it eventually grows boisterous and rather burlesque (in Sketch VI).

M. M. ♩=76 SKETCH IV.
Molto espressivo

M. M. ♩=100 SKETCH V.

M. M. ♩.=80. *A la Burlesque.* SKETCH VI.

M. M. ♩=76.

SKETCH VII.

Leggiero

p

Ped. *

Ped. *

etc.

M. M. ♩=76.

SKETCH VIII.

Leggiero

p

Ped. *

Ped. *

Ped. *

Ped. *

etc.

(Sketch VIII represents a natural development of Sketch VII.)

SKETCH IX. (Combination of Sketches VIII and IV.)
 M. M. ♩ = 76.

p Leggiero *mf* *Espr.*

p Leggiero *Motif* *Espr.* etc.

Ped. * *Ped.* * *Ped.* * *Ped.* *

In Sketches VII and VIII, we have a peculiar specimen (of spontaneous expression), which, at first, I considered a new melody in its proper harmonious garb. But I found much later that it was intimately related to Sketch IV. And I was astonished when I realized that Sketch VIII actually represented the natural (harmonious) setting to (the motif of) Sketch IV.

I have combined Sketches VIII and IV in Sketch IX without changing their original forms in any way. Since many months had elapsed between the expressions, represented by Sketches IV and VIII, we have here, in my opinion, an extraordinary example of subconscious development. About a year ago I came across Chopin's *Concerto No. 1 E minor* and realized, to my surprise and gratification, that it was this composition, first movement beginning of E major part (piano solo), which had originally aroused in me that mood to which I have given such frequent expression without the faintest (conscious) memory of its original excitation.

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M. M. ♩=76.

SKETCH X A.



M. M. ♩=76.

SKETCH X B.



Sketch XA is an expression of a feeling of comfort—a reassurance of reestablished health after a temporary indisposition.

Sketch XB presents itself just as spontaneously several hours later; during this interval I had occupied myself with the study of one of Liszt's *Petrarca sonnets*, (consciously) quite oblivious of XA. In my opinion XB, also, expresses a feeling of comfort born, in this case, of the realization that I had conquered some difficult parts of the Liszt composition. Every musical person will at once recognize in XB a matured development of XA. I feel justified in considering XB another demonstration of subconscious growth.

SKETCH XI.

1925



Sketch XI shows how thoroughly a marginal (visional) impression may register. I had barely glanced at a program which contained Johann

Strauss' *Blue Danube*, when I caught myself improvising this variation (Sketch XI) of the second part of the *Blue Danube* during the discussion of an irrelevant subject.

SKETCH XIIA.



Sketch XIIA represents the germ of which XIIB is the finished composition; XIIA is the vaguest form of the musical idea, which I developed in XIIB. While sketching this musical fragment, the idea of the lullaby presented itself, and I heard (ideally) the even, rocking accompaniment, peculiar to the lullaby type. Simultaneously, some fragments of a typical lullaby text appeared to me, properly rhymed and ordered.

This musical idea emerged quite spontaneously while I was reading a German *Journal of Psychology* without having, of course, any idea of music in my conscious mind. I do not know if this lullaby (XIIB) represents a manifestation of the parental instinct or if it is a case of cryptomnesia—a subconscious memory of my own childhood days. The latter seems quite possible because the text appeared in German which I very rarely speak.

(Sketch XIIB follows on pages 418-420)

LULLABY

Andante cantabile.

SKETCH XII B.

M. M. ♩ = 84.

June, 1925

First system of musical notation. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass staff. The tempo is marked *Andante cantabile* and the metronome marking is M. M. ♩ = 84. The first measure of the bass staff is marked *pp Legatissimo*. The first measure of the treble staff is marked *Sempre Ped.*

Second system of musical notation. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass staff. The first measure of the bass staff is marked *P.* and the second measure of the treble staff is marked *P.*

Third system of musical notation. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass staff. The first measure of the bass staff is marked *P.*

Fourth system of musical notation. The key signature is three flats and the time signature is 4/4. The music is written for piano with a treble and bass staff. The first measure of the bass staff is marked *P.*, the second measure of the treble staff is marked *P.*, the third measure of the bass staff is marked *P.*, and the fourth measure of the treble staff is marked *pp*. The first measure of the bass staff is also marked *P.* and the second measure of the treble staff is marked *P.*

LULLABY—Continued



LULLABY—Concluded

A musical score for a lullaby, concluding. The score is written for piano and features five systems of music. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by a gentle, flowing melody in the treble and a steady, rhythmic accompaniment in the bass. The score includes various dynamic markings: *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). A *riten.* (ritardando) marking is present in the final system, indicating a gradual deceleration. The piece concludes with a final chord in the treble staff.

The musical score is written for piano and features five systems of music. Each system consists of a treble and bass staff joined by a brace. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats) and the time signature is 3/4. The music is characterized by a gentle, flowing melody in the treble and a steady, rhythmic accompaniment in the bass. The score includes various dynamic markings: *pp* (pianissimo) and *p* (piano). A *riten.* (ritardando) marking is present in the final system, indicating a gradual deceleration. The piece concludes with a final chord in the treble staff.

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